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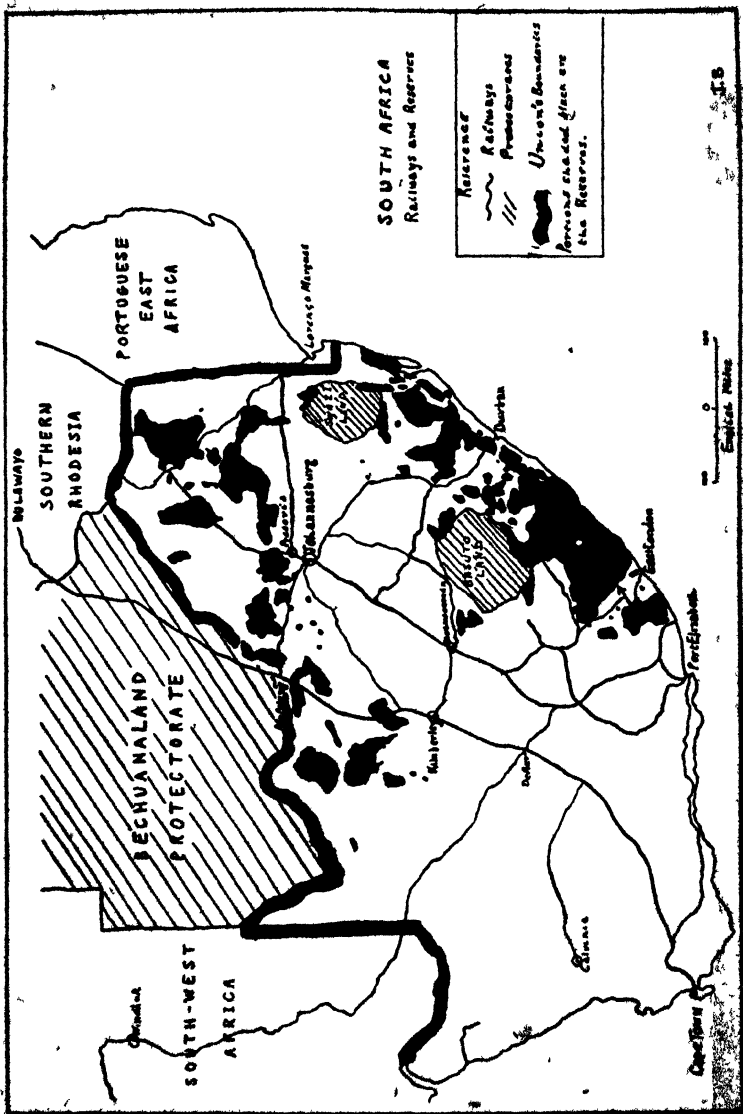
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# THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN





# THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN

*by*

JOHN BURGER

LONDON  
VICTOR GOLLANCZ LTD  
1944

*First published March 1943.*  
*Second impression April 1943.*  
*Third impression November 1943.*  
*Fourth impression January 1944*

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## PREFACE

THE FACTS presented in this book are taken from a large variety of sources, most of which are inaccessible to the general reader. These sources include innumerable official reports, debates, minutes, and statistical tables; they also include most of the publications of secondary authorities on South African affairs, past and present; finally, they include newspapers, periodicals, and many occasional memoranda, both South African and foreign. There is little point either in encumbering the text with footnotes that merely serve to distract the reader's attention, or in adding long lists of references which the general reader will in any case not be in a position to verify.

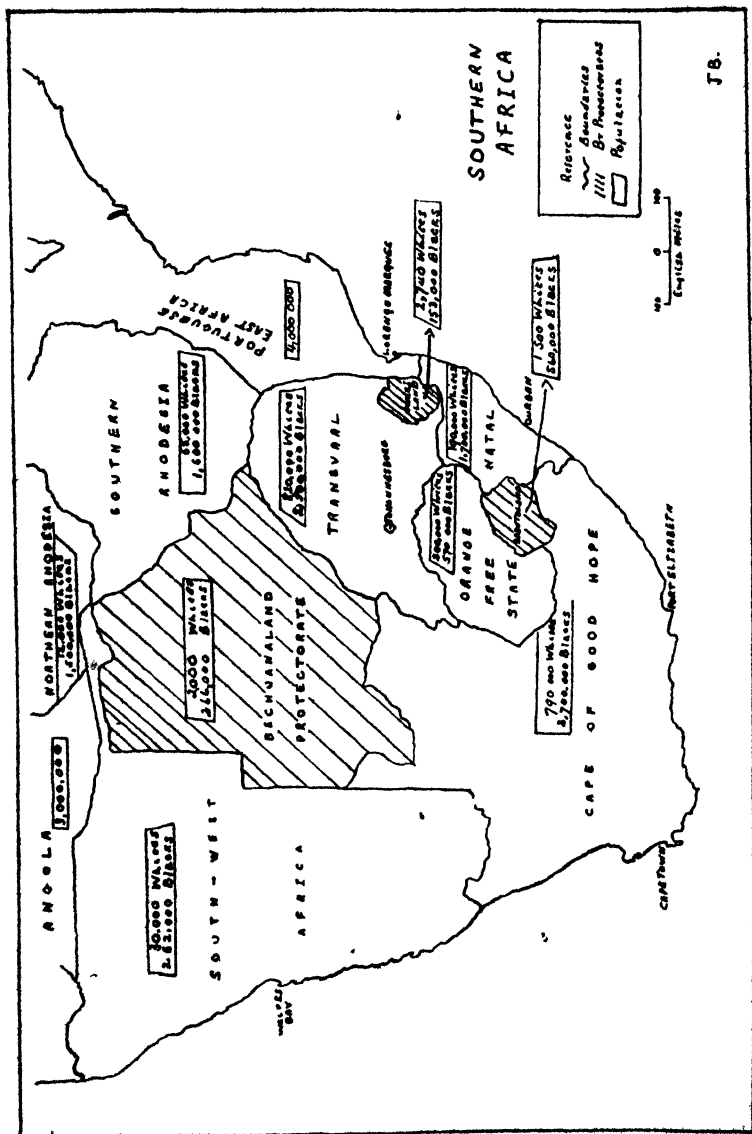
Figures have, wherever possible, been taken from official sources. That the latest official figures are, in several instances, some years old, does not invalidate the general truth of the conclusions drawn from them.

Since the major part of this book was written in the months immediately preceding the declaration of war, one or two minor details may be out-of-date by the time this appears in print. For example, the name of the leader of the Nationalist Party, or of the Minister of Native Affairs, may have changed. But readers will soon realise that such changes are, literally, nominal, and do not in the least affect the main issues at stake. Where a change that is important has taken place a footnote to that effect has been added.

JOHN BURGER  
*South Africa.*

## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

MR. JOHN BURGER originally wrote *The Black Man's Burden* in 1939, and revised and brought it up to date in 1942.



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## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 1. THE TAVERN OF THE SEAS

**T**HE AREA which to-day comprises the Union of South Africa, the three protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland, and the Mandated Territory of South-West Africa, attracted the active attention of Europe only after the discovery of diamonds and gold during the latter half of the 19th century. Till then it had not figured much on the list of colonies, since it had small commercial value and provided little outlet for the industrial capital which was piling up in Europe and America. The discovery of precious minerals wrenched the country violently from its peaceful rut, but it accentuated rather than created most of the conditions which to-day constitute the many "problems" that exist. To understand these conditions it is necessary to go back, in order to discover the social and economic forces that created the modern Southern Africa.

The first contact of Europe with Southern Africa resulted from the successful attempts of the Portuguese to discover a trade route to India by sea. By the end of the 15th century the Portuguese had rounded the Cape, and for the next hundred years they held the virtual monopoly of trade with the East; they drove the Arabs off the Indian Ocean, captured their towns on the East Coast of Africa, and made themselves undisputed masters of the new and profitable trade route. Lisbon became the European market for Eastern goods, and of all the merchants who dealt there the Dutch were the most important.

Towards the end of the 16th century industry, trade, and commerce began to feel the stimulating effect of the gold brought by Spain and England from the New World, and this period coincided with the attempt made by Spain, partly for economic and partly for religious and political reasons, to establish her dominion over the Netherlands. When Philip II of Spain gained political control over Portugal he closed the harbour of Lisbon to Dutch ships in the hope of depriving them of their main source of national wealth and so crushing their power to resist; but the attempt was fatal to Spanish and Portuguese interests, for the Dutch determined to trade on their own account. In 1598 they sent out an exploratory expedition to the East, and by 1602 they had established the famous Dutch East India Company, the instrument by which they overthrew Spanish rule and freed their consciences along with their commerce.

The Dutch East India Company was a powerful monopoly concern operating on a narrow market. It strictly limited the supply of spice, and, in order not to flood the market, destroyed crops in the best modern fashion. It wrested Ceylon, Java, and Sumatra from their inhabitants and exhibited all the characteristics of its English and French counterparts—ruthless exploitation, high dividends, bad book-keeping, and corruption; it was, in fact, a Chartered Company enjoying powerful political influence and being privileged to go to any lengths in the East provided it brought wealth to the shareholders in the West.

Fifty years after its foundation the Company felt the need of a half-way house to India and established a refreshment station at the Cape where fresh water and food might be taken in, storm-tossed ships repaired, and scurvy-ridden sailors given rest. That was all that the Cape ever really meant to the Dutch East India Company, and the first Commander, van Riebeeck, was instructed to keep down expenses and not to prevent any other nation, except the Portuguese, from establishing similar refreshment stations if they wanted to; but economic necessity, and the energy and ambition of some of the later Governors, turned the refreshment station into a settlement and the settlement into a colony. What the Company thus considered as merely "an item in the East India ledger" was the beginning of European contact with and conquest of Southern Africa.

## 2. EUROPEANS, HOTTENTOTS AND BUSHMEN

The first aborigines with whom the Dutch officials came into contact were the Hottentots, loosely organised into about five tribes; at the coast were the *Strandlopers* (Beachcombers) and, some eighty or ninety miles to the east, the nomadic cattle-owning tribes who were accustomed to take their cattle periodically to graze near Table Mountain, where the Dutch had made their settlement. The Dutch welcomed the Hottentots for their cattle, which they bought from them for copper wire and beads, but it was not long before the question of grazing rights brought about the first clash between black and white. The Dutch built forts and houses and laid out gardens, and the Hottentots found that, year by year, more of their valuable pasturage had been enclosed. They resisted this process by the only means at their disposal—that is, by attempting to make life unendurable for the European intruders by murder and plunder. Needless to say, the attempt failed, and, within ten years of the arrival of the Dutch, Commander van Riebeeck was able to report that the Hottentots had been forced to recognise Dutch occupation. The Hottentots were thus the first natives of South Africa to feel the heavy hand of Europe; they were the first victims of a process that was to run through all South African history, a process of occupation, resistance, war, and conquest, ending in dispossession. As they were deprived of their land they gradually took service with the Europeans, who thus solved,

entirely to their own satisfaction, the twin problems of land and labour. Before this could happen, however, the Company, having turned down a proposal to import indentured Chinese labourers, had met the shortage of unskilled labour by bringing slaves from the East Coast and from Madagascar; these, together with the Hottentots, were to form the labour force of the Colony for more than a century, and it was the mixture of Hottentot blood with that of the slaves and the Europeans that formed the basis of the mixed race that is to-day an integral part of the population of the Union.

For the first five years of Dutch occupation the only Europeans at the Cape were the officials and employees of the Company. But in 1657 van Riebeeck, partly to provide a cheaper form of defence against the Hottentots and partly because he thought that a rigidly controlled production by non-official farmers would be less expensive than State production, introduced a small number of Free Burghers, to whom land was given. This class increased and began to move eastwards towards the fertile valleys of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein, and by the end of the 17th century the free population had been considerably increased by Dutch and German immigrants whom the Company, in a solitary fit of colonisation, had assisted to settle on the land. Further, about 150 French Protestants were brought out, and they considerably enriched the life of the small European community at the Cape. By 1706 the Free Burghers of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein were sufficiently numerous and influential successfully to resist an attempt on the part of a small clique of high officials to corner the Cape produce market for their own private benefit.

As the demands of the Cape market increased, cattle-farming became more popular, and those farmers who desired to keep cattle began to move to the east, across the mountains, in search of larger grazing-grounds. These farmers were the first Trek Boers. Moving slowly eastwards with their ever-increasing herds, they gradually shed all but a nominal control on the part of the Company at Cape Town. The Company, not primarily interested in colonisation and not wishing to extend the boundaries under its administration, was not prepared to spend the necessary money for the effective control of its distant subjects. For a time it refused to sell land and granted yearly leaseholds only, with the not unnatural result that trekking increased, since the farmers had no incentive to improve their temporary farms; when the land became exhausted there was always more to be had by trekking farther afield. The ultimate result was that there developed a race of cattle-farmer who was independent and impatient of all legal control and obligation; he made his own primitive houses and clothes, lived on meat and pumpkins, maintained only a faint contact with civilised ways, and was in truth a king on his farm, making and administering his own rules as it suited him. Calvinist as he was, he stuck tenaciously to an Old

Testament view of religion; and his religion, his economic state, and such political ideas as he had, all tended towards a rugged landowning individualism of the pioneering kind.

During the trekking process the cattlemen came into contact with another indigenous people, the small Bushmen. Living on herbs, roots and game, and accustomed to a nomadic life, the Bushmen did not adapt themselves, as the Hottentot had done, to European ways of living; especially were they unable to understand European ideas on the private ownership of land. They fought tenaciously for their right to hunt where they pleased and in their accustomed manner, but the Europeans had better weapons. Hunting parties were organised and the Bushmen were cleared much as game would have been cleared. In one such hunting expedition more than 250 Bushmen were exterminated, and the remnants of the "little people" fled towards the north-west, where their descendants are to be found to-day roaming the semi-desert areas. It is interesting to note that the Union Government has recently set aside a reserve where Bushmen may roam at will, and has thus, in part, made tardy reparation for the earlier extermination. The famous primitive art of the Bushmen has attracted the attention of scientists, and this, together with the fact that their numbers are insignificant, may perhaps explain why their recent treatment at the hands of European governments has been a shade more generous than that of other groups. A theory has grown up in South Africa that the Bushman is "unteachable"; but this theory rests largely upon the historical but unsupported testimony of frontiersmen who were busy exterminating them in order to occupy their land.

### 3. THE BANTU

During the last quarter of the 18th century the Dutch cattle-farmers began to come into contact with an altogether different type of aboriginal inhabitant, the Bantu,<sup>1</sup> who were more advanced in culture and more progressive than either the Hottentots or Bushmen, and who numbered millions where the others had numbered thousands. They were in many cases settled agriculturalists with well-developed social and political institutions, and the business of taking possession of their lands was more protracted and bloody.

The original home of the Bantu is probably near the equatorial highlands on the East Coast of Africa, where, possibly 2,000 years ago, Negroes from the Congo and the West Coast mixed with Hamitic people from the east to form the Bantu people. From this original home migrations, caused by pressure of population, tribal wars, and slave-raiding, brought the Bantu southwards through the present Nyasaland, Tan-

<sup>1</sup> The word *Bantu* describes a linguistic rather than a racial group but it is commonly used as an alternative to *African* or *Native*, and it is so used in this book.

**ganyika**, and the **Rhodesias**. The migrations took place over hundreds of years, and by the middle of the 18th century the advance guard of the Bantu had reached the banks of the Great Fish River in the Eastern Province of the Cape, pushing before it the feebler Hottentots and Bushmen. It is probable that, had the Europeans not been beforehand, the Bantu would have exterminated or absorbed their less progressive enemies.

The tribal and social organisation of the Bantu will be described later. Here it is sufficient to say that it was based on communal ownership of land, each family having sufficient land for subsistence. The chief was the depository of tribal rights; he was no despot, being controlled both in legislation and in the administration of justice by the tribal council, or, in important cases, by the whole tribe. The social unit was the village, which consisted of the members of the same family, though the word "family", as will be explained later, has a wider meaning than that which Europeans attach to it. The Bantu were cattle-farmers and agriculturalists.

It was with these virile people that the European Trek Boers began to dispute the ownership of land at the end of the 18th century. Beginning in 1779, the struggle continued for about 100 years, and the usual process was this: cattle raids would take place across the ill-defined eastern boundary, much like the Scottish Border raids; reprisals would follow, and about once in ten years a minor incident would precipitate a regular war, during which the Bantu tribe in question would gain a preliminary victory, and would then be defeated, but not completely conquered. There were nine of these so-called Kaffir Wars, and they probably coincided with drought and depression in the Bantu territories. On neither side of the border was the Government sufficiently strong to maintain order or peace, and typical frontier conditions prevailed until about the middle of the 19th century, when the British Government, which had by then acquired the Cape from the Dutch, took up a more vigorous attitude on behalf of its citizens, and began a policy of annexation. One important result of the inability of the Dutch Trek Boers to conquer Bantu territory across the Fish River was their ultimate decision, in 1836, to trek round the Bantu on to the high veld of the present Orange Free State and Transvaal. This opened up for European occupation vast stretches of new land, sometimes occupied and sometimes not, and led to the establishment of the Boer Republics. But the story of this migration belongs to a later period, and will be dealt with subsequently.

#### 4. THE CAPE AT THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY

It will be convenient now to sum up the situation at the end of the 18th century, when events in Europe altered the whole current of South African history. The refreshment station had grown into a colony of

great extent but sparse population, perhaps 30,000 altogether. The enormous area which technically belonged to the Company was divided into four districts—the Cape, Stellenbosch, Swellendam, and Graaff Reinet. In Cape Town there were Company's officials and a non-official population that eked out a livelihood by keeping lodging-houses, by fishing, brickmaking, or market-gardening. The chief attraction about keeping a lodging-house was the possibilities it afforded for smuggling and for making money from visitors. The Company kept a strict monopolistic control over all forms of commerce; it allowed certain minor participation in local government; it tried to cut expenses to the bone, and connived at bribery and corruption in its officials as a consequence.

At Stellenbosch there lived a class of well-to-do farmer who cultivated vines and corn and kept a few sheep and cattle. These gentlemen farmers built the beautiful old Cape Dutch houses that stand to this day, and lived the leisurely lives of slave-owners. On the whole they treated their slaves well and were a law-abiding body of people; they exploited their slaves and Hottentots, and were in turn exploited by the Company on behalf of the shareholders in Holland. In both the Cape and the Stellenbosch districts the mixed race known as the Cape Coloured had made its appearance. In the Swellendam and Graaff Reinet districts lived the cattle-, sheep-, and horse-farmers, occupying 6,000 acres or more at a time, trekking frequently, far removed from the more civilised Cape, not so much lawless as a law unto themselves, depending largely on hired Hottentot labour, asking for little more than plenty of land and no interference from Government. When Government did interfere in 1795 these men rebelled and formed two short-lived republics; and in the next five years the British had to suppress two more rebellions in the same area.

There were as yet no Bantu within the Colony's border, but, as we have seen, the advance guards of European and African civilisations had already met and had begun to trade and to fight. It is important to notice that the torch-bearers of European civilisation in this contact with the Bantu were the cattle-farmers and Trek Boers of Graaff Reinet and Swellendam; they were the forerunners of the later immigration which, under the name of the Great Trek, carried that civilisation northwards. Almost untouched by contact with the outer world, they eventually took with them their individualistic and Calvinistic political, social, and economic views, and applied them to the territories and people they conquered. In the development of South African Native policy their ideas have played, and still play, a considerable part. All unconsciously, their interpretation of the Old Testament fitted the facts of their own history as they saw it. They were the chosen people, and their place-names and the names of their children have a strong biblical flavour; they were the standard-bearers of civilisation miraculously

preserved in a land of barbarians; these barbarians—Hottentot, Bushmen, or Bantu—were the children of Ham, condemned, on the authority of the Bible, to the perpetual status of hewers of wood and drawers of water. The fact that these theories suited the land and labour policies of the Trek Boers and their descendants remarkably well is merely an illustration of the rule that classes tend to interpret religion to suit their economic desires.

#### 5. THE DUTCH GO, THE BRITISH COME

When the French revolutionary armies invaded Holland in 1795, William of Orange took refuge in the more peaceful atmosphere of Kew Gardens, and, by arrangement with him, Great Britain occupied the Cape for the first time. The Company was in any case bankrupt, and when the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 provided that all Dutch colonies, except Ceylon, should be returned, it was the Dutch Republic, ally of France, that took over the Cape from the British. For three short years the Cape was administered according to the ideas of a brilliant Dutch advocate, de Mist, who was thoroughly imbued with the governmental principles then current in France; but by 1806 it became abundantly clear that neither Napoleon's ambitions nor those of the French upper middle class whom he represented would be satisfied with Britain's position of superiority. For her part, Britain realised that the Cape in the hands of allies of France was a pistol at the heart of her trade route with India, and she accordingly took possession of it by force for the second and final time in 1806. The cession was ratified by treaty with Holland after the defeat of Napoleon and the restoration of William of Orange.

Though the British Government looked upon the Cape as a naval outpost rather than as a colony, it took a more serious view of its governmental duties than the Dutch East India Company had done. Government was reorganised; the currency was stabilised; circuit courts were introduced, much to the annoyance of the frontier farmers, who found that the courts were interested in what they had considered to be purely personal matters, such as the treatment of servants; the slave trade was abolished, and Government tried to meet the resulting labour shortage by *pass* laws restricting the movement of Hottentots. Unemployment in Britain and the generally unquiet times that succeeded Waterloo, when British landlords were safeguarding their interests by legislation against the working class, led to emigration, and in 1820 about 5,000 British settlers came out to the Cape to increase the population of the eastern districts where the land shortage was just becoming acute. Missionaries came, particularly those of the London Missionary Society, and began to bombard the home Government with facts and fancies about the aboriginal Hottentot and the "noble savage". Dr. Philip, most famous of all the missionaries, even took a troupe on tour in



England; and public opinion among the British upper and middle classes, often more interested in the lot of Africans 6,000 miles away than in the health and wealth of their own working class, was deeply stirred.

Coinciding with the period of reform in England that began after Lord Castlereagh's death in 1822, agitation for reform in the Cape Colony was set on foot, largely by the newly-arrived settlers, who were not prepared to tolerate the tyranny of Lord Charles Somerset, a governor whose sole qualification for the post seems to have been his relationship to the politically powerful Beaufort family in England. After much agitation he was removed, and a series of important reforms were introduced. The freedom of the Press was achieved in 1827; in 1828 the Charter of Justice made the courts independent of the executive and established trial by jury; in the same year the famous Fiftieth Ordinance, largely the result of Dr. Philip's persistent advocacy, repealed the pass laws and established the principle of equality in the eyes of the law for "all free persons of colour". In 1834 slavery was abolished, and in the same year a Legislative Council with an official majority was set up; the old Dutch local courts of *Landdrost* and *Heemraden* were abolished and paid magistrates appointed, and a few years later popularly elected municipal councils were instituted. Freedom of internal trade and the right to export surplus produce; the greater demand for agricultural products at the Cape and, until Napoleon's death, at St. Helena; and the stabilisation of the currency, all created something like boom agricultural conditions. In 1825 the first steamship reached Table Bay; new towns were established and roads and bridges were built. Altogether the first thirty years of British rule at the Cape were years of great economic activity and of considerable administrative reform. During the process, however, the British had ridden roughshod over the language, traditions, and fundamental beliefs of the Dutch, and especially of the Trek Boers. There had been more Kaffir Wars, and the British Government, strongly under the influence of liberalism and the philanthropic movement, and not wishing to extend its African commitments, had refused to satisfy the land-hunger of the farmers by the annexation of Bantu territory. From about 1834 a few frontier farmers, despairing of obtaining more land on the old cheap terms, began to trek round the Bantu areas, across the Orange River, and on to the High veld. In the same year another Kaffir War broke out, and in the frontier districts many farm-houses were destroyed and stock was stolen. The Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, sympathised with the plight of the farmers, and annexed a portion of the defeated Africans' land to hand out as farms; but the British Government reversed his decision, and when the frontiersmen realised that nothing more was to be hoped from a Government that refused to help the white at the expense of the black, the Great Trek began in earnest.

## 6. THE GREAT TREK

During the decade from 1836 till 1846 something like 10,000 men, women, and children left their homes in the Cape Colony and trekked northwards in the hope that the British Government would leave them in peace. Their proclaimed reasons for leaving and their expressed future intentions are interesting as throwing considerable light on subsequent relations between them and the British, and between them and the Bantu. To this day the principles of the Trekkers are held up by Nationalist party orators as worthy of emulation, and, as we shall see, these principles are as convenient a political and religious cover for economic class interests to-day as they were a century ago.

The Trekkers complained of the suppression of their language and institutions; of the lack of protection on the frontier; of the unfair way in which the liberation of the slaves had been carried out; of the unjustifiable odium which missionaries and other prejudiced persons had cast upon them. They complained that they had no voice in the government that taxed them—not that they paid many taxes. One lady, in her diary, spoke about the unbiblical policy of equality between black and white, and this phrase does really convey some of the religious feeling of horror with which the Dutch emigrants viewed a policy that placed white and black on an equal footing and interfered in the relations between master and man. The use of religion to justify exploitation is familiar, and readers of Marx and Kingsley will remember how those two writers railed against the 19th-century industrialists who valued religion chiefly because it preached contentment to the working class. The religious argument, reinforced by social and economic fear, is still met with frequently in South Africa, and is in fact the staple diet with which the Nationalist Party feeds its followers.

The Voortrekkers envisaged an independent republican State with plenty of land and no nonsense about equality between black and white. They intended to obtain land justly, by purchase, and to found their State upon principles of religion and justice; but in this, as in many other matters, they remind us of the Pilgrim Fathers, whose pious sentiments were not always equally well reflected in their dealings with the aborigines of America. After a good deal of quarrelling among the leaders as to where they should settle, and after one or two preliminary bouts with the Matabele, the most intelligent of the leaders, Piet Retief, moved eastwards, in 1837, towards the present Natal. At that time Natal was ruled by the Zulus under the tyrant Dingaan. The Zulus had been an obscure tribe that had risen to pre-eminence under Dingaan's predecessor, Chaka, a man of outstanding ability who invented a new form of attack—the famous crescent, most deadly in tribal warfare—and led his regiments to the conquest of the surrounding tribes, devastating the country far and wide. Both he and Dingaan were cruel, avaricious

savages, and, no matter how we may sympathise with their political dilemma when faced with European invasion, it would be foolish to close our eyes to this fact. They were dictators of the worst type, and slew indiscriminately all who did not conform.

Retief went to meet Dingaan and negotiated for the transfer of land; but the Zulu chief played for time and asked the Trekkers, as an earnest of their good intentions, to recover some stolen cattle for him. This done, a treaty was drawn up by which the Boers were to be given a large portion of Natal. Dingaan probably intended this land for use and not for ownership, but, in any case, the ease with which the cattle had been recovered by the Europeans had frightened him, and he determined to kill the white wizards. At a royal feast he had Retief and his seventy followers murdered; but vengeance followed about a year later, when, on December 16, 1838, the Zulus were decisively defeated at the battle of Blood River. Their military power was broken and their land was annexed by the Trekkers.

At a prayer meeting on the eve of the battle of Blood River, Cilliers, the political religious leader of the army of vengeance, vowed that if victory was granted the day would be remembered with thankfulness by the Trekkers and their descendants. The "Lord of the far-flung battle line" apparently valued this promise highly, for that side of the bargain with heaven was kept. The Trekkers kept their promise, too, and Dingaan's Day is celebrated in South Africa to this day as a national holiday, though its name might more appropriately be Voortrekker Day. On Dingaan's Day large gatherings of Afrikaners listen in the open air to political and religious speeches exhorting them to follow in the wise ways of their fathers, to keep to the old paths, and to adhere to the policy of treating the Bantu sternly but fairly, the quality of fairness being a matter whose interpretation rests solely with the Afrikaners. These gatherings are often held at some river picnic spot, which is reached, not in the Voortrekker ox-wagon, but in the less forefatherly but more comfortable sedan motor-car which the labour of the Bantu has enabled the descendants of the Voortrekkers to acquire. While speeches are being made and prayers being offered in thanksgiving for the victory of civilisation over barbarism, the barbarian Bantu is patiently and good-humouredly busy with the preparation of the picnic meal for his civilised masters. In the towns the more sophisticated youths regard Dingaan's Day as a very welcome holiday in the hot season, before the Christmas rush sets in. The Africans themselves, in the towns, use the day for various forms of sports and, frequently, as a convenient day for meetings of national Bantu societies.

The general tendency of Dingaan's Day speeches is to the effect that on that day God gave the victory over barbarism to the representatives of a Christian civilisation. It is, naturally, not remembered that God was emphatically on the side that was fortunate enough to have

gunpowder. Latterly, many speakers are using the opportunity to stress the responsibilities for good government entailed by such a victory; but no hint is ever given that the fundamental superiority of the Europeans and their inherent right to decide what constitutes good government are possibly open to argument. In 1938 the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek took place. For some years beforehand funds were raised by the sale of Voortrekker stamps and by public subscription, and the foundation stone of a monument to symbolise Europe's conquest of Africa was laid. One cannot help feeling that a much-needed hospital for Natives, or an African institution for medical training, would have been more in keeping with the emphatic protestation of the Afrikaner that civilisation had conquered barbarism; but such a monument would not have accurately reflected the real fact that Blood River was a victory for private property in land. The Trek celebrations included a grand tour of ox-wagons, replicas of the original, from all parts of the Union to Pretoria, and the Nationalist Party seized the opportunity for large-scale racial propaganda, both anti-British and anti-African. All this would be of little importance for the purposes of this book were it not that it reveals one of the factors that govern the attitude of most Europeans towards the Bantu. Dingaans Day and all that it connotes in the history of the Afrikaner people serves most successfully to mask the fundamental economic reasons for inequality and suppression.

#### 7. THE BANTU LOSE

Having conquered Natal, with its harbour at Durban, the Boers soon found themselves at odds with the Cape Colony. Merchants at the Cape were afraid of the possible rivalry of Durban, where ships from the United States and from Holland had put in to trade. Further, though the Zulu military power was broken, thousands of landless Zulus roamed the country, and cattle-thieving was rife. This led to the inevitable raids, to the capture of Zulu children, who became "apprenticed" to the farmers, and, generally, to the disturbance of all the Bantu tribes up to the border of the Cape Colony. The Governor at the Cape eventually persuaded the British Government to annex Natal (in 1843), and many of the Trekkers left the country in disgust, seeking the high veld once more. They settled in the present Free State and Transvaal, only to be followed up by the British authorities from the Cape; in 1848 the Free State was proclaimed the Orange River Sovereignty, with a Resident Commissioner to represent the British Government. But by 1850 the repeal of the Corn Laws had brought about changes in political parties in Britain and had altered parliamentary opinion on the question of colonial expansion. The new country was sparsely populated by a race of farmers who possessed little or no cash income worth taxing and who were antagonistic to British rule. Also, it possessed no mineral attractions. In 1852, accordingly, by the Convention of Sand River,

Great Britain withdrew all claims to authority beyond the Vaal River, and in 1854 she withdrew south of the Orange River. This left the two Boer Republics, the Orange Free State and the South African Republic, or Transvaal, independent of British control.

In the early days of the Republics the European citizens were as nearly as possible equal in wealth and condition. Wealth consisted of land and stock, and there was so much land for the scattered population that there was no immediate shortage or difference in wealth. It was when the population increased, when towns were established, and when minerals were discovered, that differences began to appear; then those whose fathers had grabbed more than their fair share at the beginning became comparatively wealthy. In such homogeneous communities as the early economic conditions produced it was natural that, on the white side of the colour line, democratic constitutions should be made.

The process by which the Bantu who were living in the Free State and the Transvaal became dispossessed of their land was sometimes accompanied by violence and war, but, more frequently, it was a silent process comparable to the enclosure movement in England. Often, indeed, the actual occupation of land by Europeans was made in ignorance that anyone else had a right to it; farms were granted to individuals without the knowledge that any Bantu were in occupation. This statement may seem strange to those who do not realise the economic facts. Population, Bantu and European, was exceedingly sparse, and on farms of from 50,000 to 100,000 acres it was quite possible in those days of lack of roads for people to be living on the same land without being aware of each other's existence. More important still, possession meant something very different to the European and to the Bantu. To the former it meant possession, a right in property; to the latter it meant use. In those parts of the Republics where population was more dense and where there was obvious occupation, the Boers recognised the authority of Native chiefs over their own people and left them in possession of their land. But the usual border disputes and cattle raids led to war and conquest by the Europeans, who, having brought the Africans under their political control, left them in occupation of part of their land under the name of Reserves. The total result was that in both the Republics the mass of the land which had formerly been occupied by Bantu was gradually divided into private estates or held as Crown land which might not be sold to Africans.

One Bantu tribe managed to retain its independence. The Basuto nation had been founded in the early part of the 19th century, from remnants of other tribes that fled before the Zulu and the Matabele, by an extremely capable Bantu statesman named Moshesh. In his naturally defended mountain home he was quite capable of holding his own, in war and in diplomacy, against the neighbouring Free State;

but as the Republic became stronger and as border difficulties increased, it was obvious that, sooner or later, the Boers would make a determined effort to bring him to terms and to annex his valuable land. When he was on the point of defeat at their hands, in 1868, he cleverly appealed to Great Britain for protection, which was granted, and so the Basutos remained unconquered. To-day Basutoland is a Crown Colony which the descendants of the Voortrekkers would like Britain to hand over to the Union of South Africa.

During the fifty years of their existence there grew up in the two Republics a policy towards the Bantu which had all the features that we might expect when a small body of landowners controls political power. The Bantu were prohibited from owning land except in the Reserves; they were taxed in order to force them to look for work with the new owners of their land; pass laws restricted their movements and helped to tie their labour to the land; severe laws against stock theft were made; Masters and Servants laws regulated the relations between the farmers and their Bantu labourers in favour of the former. Everywhere the distinction between black and white was clearly drawn; the white man was the landowner and the black man was the labourer. As a labourer he was no better and not much worse off than the English agricultural labourer in the early 19th century; it is true that the English labourer was not prevented by law from owning land, but economic barriers forbade what the law pretended to allow. Compared with the Irish peasantry of this time the Bantu lived a happy and contented life.

#### 8. DIAMONDS, GOLD, AND WAR

During the latter part of the 19th century Britain abandoned her hopes of trying to keep the peace on the borders of the Cape Colony and embarked on a policy of annexation. Step by step the land between the Fish River and the Natal border was annexed and British magistrates and police were sent into the former Bantu territories to rule. In most cases these areas were reserved for the Bantu, but taxation was imposed in order to create a labour force. By 1870 it was certain that diamonds in great quantities were to be found in the undefined territory west of the Republics, and, for the first time, capital on a large scale began to be invested in the country. By a process of map-drawing not unlike that employed in the case of Sudetenland, Britain managed to obtain possession of the disputed diamond-fields, and all the South African States, white and black, felt the economic effects of the discovery of minerals. Agricultural prices soared and farmers from the Free State were able, for a short time, to obtain a pound for a dozen eggs; railway construction began, to the great profit of British heavy industries; and for many years the coal used at Kimberley was imported from England. Money and people poured into the country. The Bantu now began to come out of their tribal lands in ever-increasing numbers to work for cash, and some-

times for guns, on the mines, the railways, and at the harbours. The process of industrialisation with cheap labour had begun. Sixteen years later, in 1886, the discovery of payable quantities of gold on the Witwatersrand produced an economic upheaval on a far greater scale than Kimberley had provided. Within a brief time of the discovery there were more foreigners in the Transvaal, concentrated on the Rand, than Boers. The construction of railways, the provision of mining material for the Rand, and the general economic boom that followed provided British investors with a wonderful market, and it is no wonder that political pressure was soon employed in favour of the annexation of the Transvaal. Ten years before the discovery of the Rand, at a time when the presence of gold was known, Britain had attempted to take the Transvaal, and actually held it—uneasily, it is true—for a few years; but a vigorous war of independence in 1880 and 1881 had decided Gladstone to abandon the work that Disraeli had begun, and the Transvaal had regained its freedom on condition that it allowed Britain to control its foreign policy. After the gold-mining industry had been established there were plenty of excuses for annexation. The Transvaal constitution had been constructed to meet the needs of a simple agricultural community, and the flood of wealth soon corrupted the administration that was unable to adapt itself to the new requirements of a highly specialised industry.

In the meanwhile more British capital under Cecil Rhodes was pushing northwards, west of the Republics. In 1886 Southern Bechuanaland was added to the Cape Colony, and a few years later the northern portion of Bechuanaland became a British protectorate in order to prevent the Transvaal from expanding westwards or Germany from expanding eastwards. That the Colonial Office was aware of what was going on and of the real reasons for the annexations is evident from the scathing marginal remarks of officials on reports sent from the Governor at the Cape to the Secretary for Colonies; but the financial interests were too powerful to be checked by sarcastic permanent officials. News of gold north of the Transvaal began to filter through, and in 1889 Rhodes' agents persuaded Lobengula, chief of the Matabele, to grant monopoly concessions for mining to the newly formed British South Africa Company. Both in the formation of the Company and in obtaining the concession great play had been made with Royalty, and the British Crown had once more proved a valuable asset to the British investor.

To Lobengula the concession meant a mining concession only; to the Company it meant much more. Farms were liberally promised from African land to all who would join Dr. Jameson's Pioneers to go north. The result was inevitable. In 1890 the Pioneers settled at Salisbury, and three years later Jameson provoked a war with the Matabele and gained possession of what is now Southern Rhodesia. It is true that the fight was not quite over, for three years later the Matabele rebelled,

and considerable military expenditure was avoided only by Rhodes's action in paying a personal visit to the Matabele chiefs and persuading them to surrender.

In other parts of Africa the imperialist scramble was on. In 1884 the representatives of the European capitalists had come together in Berlin to arrange for the peaceful partition of Africa—peaceful, that is, as far as they were concerned. Spheres of influence were demarcated and boundaries were subsequently drawn without the slightest reference to the desires or interests of the African inhabitants; often these boundary lines were lines of latitude and longitude and cut through existing tribes. Everywhere treaties were made with chiefs who had little understanding of what they were putting their mark to, and less tribal authority for doing so. Treaties were usually followed by the investment of capital, "crimes" against property on the part of the Bantu, punitive expeditions, and annexation. It is interesting to note how frequently in the history of the conquest of Africa missionaries have managed to get themselves murdered, or traders to have their goods stolen, at the exact psychological moment when a good excuse was needed for "the establishment of law and order."

To return to the Transvaal; Rhodes and Jameson, probably with the full knowledge of Joseph Chamberlain, attempted to annex the Republic in 1896 by a sudden stroke. Ill-conceived and badly executed, the Jameson Raid was a complete failure, except in so far as it made war between Britain and the Republics almost certain. To add certainty, Alfred Milner was appointed Governor at the Cape. The Anglo-Boer War came in 1899, and ended with victory for the British in 1902. The whole of the present Union of South Africa and of the three Protectorates was now safe for the British investor.

In making peace with the Boers, Great Britain was forced to respect their prejudices with regard to the Bantu. In her own Colony of the Cape she had granted representative and responsible institutions in 1853 and in 1872 on condition that there should be no legal distinction on grounds merely of colour. At the Treaty of Vereeniging which ended the Anglo-Boer War Britain wanted to insert a similar clause; but the Boer leaders, among them General Hertzog and General Smuts, refused point-blank to consider the suggestion. In the end it was agreed that the matter of the Bantu franchise should stand over until the newly annexed Crown Colonies should become self-governing. It was not the last time that the interests of the Bantu were sacrificed in the sacred cause of the friendship of the two European races, English and Afrikaner.

## 9. INDIANS AND CHINESE

From 1860 onwards Indian indentured labour had been imported into Natal to work the sugar plantations. The system caused untold miseries in the Indian villages where recruiting took place; it had serious



moral effects on the men and women who came to South Africa to work for the wage of ten shillings a month ; it depressed Bantu wages ; it added an Asiatic "problem" to South Africa's list. But what are all these when added up and placed against the profits which the sugar-planters made?

In 1904 the Chamber of Mines began to clamour for the importation of Chinese indentured labour, and, although Milner and the home Government at first refused, their objections were gradually overborne by the mine-owners. The conditions under which the Chinese worked on the mines were bad. Further, they began to escape from their compounds to terrify the countryside, and Government was forced to issue arms to farmers for their self-protection. Public opinion in Britain was agitated, and the election of 1906 turned partly on "Chinese slavery", enabling the Liberals to oust the Tories. Having done so, they granted responsible government to the Transvaal and left them to deal with the problem. Eventually most of the Chinese labourers were repatriated, while a remnant remained in the Transvaal as market-gardeners and small shopkeepers.

#### 10. UNION

By 1908 Great Britain had four self-governing Colonies in South Africa. Economic revival after the war was well in its stride ; gold-mining, diamond-mining, railway construction, and farming were all once more flourishing ; towns were springing up, commerce boomed, and the population was increasing rapidly. The time had come to talk of union. One of the reasons given for union was the desirability of a common Native policy, a reason recently revived by Mr. Pirow, when Union Minister for Defence, in urging the need for closer union with the British territories to the north.

In the discussions on union the differences in Native policy between the Cape Colony and the former Republics proved a serious stumbling-block, for the Cape members of the National Convention favoured the retention of the Native franchise in force at the Cape and its extension to the north, while the ex-Republicans would rather have done without union than admit an African to the voters' roll. In the event a compromise was reached. The Cape Franchise, as it has since come to be called, was retained, and was entrenched in the Act of Union by the provision that a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament would be required for its alteration ; the Bantu in the northern provinces were left unrepresented. Keir Hardie characterised this arrangement as tantamount to writing above the portals of the British Empire : "Abandon hope all ye who enter here". While British Liberals, who were responsible for steering the Act through the British Parliament, were piously hoping that, by degrees, the more liberal southern views would permeate the north, statesmen in the Transvaal were explaining

to their followers that the northern view had triumphed and that, in due course, the south would be glad to adopt it.

In any case, union was achieved by the South Africa Act, which was passed by the British Parliament in 1909. British industrial capital was now wedded to Boer landed capitalism for the purpose of exploiting the labour of the African. The financial control rested mainly in London, however much the new Union Parliament might go through the motions of freedom. But in order to achieve that control, Great Britain's Liberal Party had been compelled to abandon the principle of equality in the eyes of the law in so far as it concerned the Bantu. Indeed, this was but the culminating effort of the 19th century, during which Tory and Liberal alike had served British capitalism well. Nor need we complain, since it was the obvious function of those parties so to do.

## CHAPTER II

### SOUTH AFRICA, 1910-1940

#### I. INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

**A** GENERATION, as these things are reckoned, has passed since the four British Colonies in South Africa united, and, while it would be tedious to recount the detailed history of those years, certain well-defined tendencies must be noted if we are to grasp the situation at the present time.

The most outstanding phenomenon of the thirty years under review is the process of industrialisation, with its attendant characteristics of urbanisation, the growth of vested interests, slum areas, poverty, labour organisation, and capitalist use of legislative power to protect the interests of the ruling class. This familiar spectacle has special features in South Africa, where the existence of a large working class that differs in colour from the ruling class has enabled the latter to reinforce the usual arguments for exploiting the former, by arguments based on racial theories.

At the time of Union the economic structure of the country was comparatively simple. The vast majority of the population lived at what was practically a subsistence level, and mineral exports, which enjoyed a stable world market, accounted for 80% of the total exports. Land and labour were still fairly plentiful, but increasing pressure on the land and the growth of sheltered industries have accelerated the change from a subsistence to a money economy. The following figures will give some idea of the changes that have taken place since union, and, more particularly, since the rise of industrialism in the period after the Great War. The population of South Africa is almost double what it was in 1910 and the relationship of rural to urban population has altered. In 1910 the European urban population was 51% of the whole, and to-day

it is 65% ; in 1910 17% of the non-European population was urban and to-day the figure is 23%. If we take the whole population we find that during the last thirty years the urban population has increased by 100% while the rural population has increased by 50%.

The number of Europeans employed in mineral production has risen from 37,000 to 50,000 and the number of non-Europeans from 298,000 to 400,000. During the same period mineral output has doubled. The number of manufacturing establishments has increased from 2,000 to 9,000, while manufacturing output has quadrupled ; exports and imports have doubled. Railway construction has increased by 25%, a remarkable fact when we remember that the principal lines from the ports to the mines had been built before Union. Trade Unions have increased from nine to 140 and membership from 10,000 to 200,000. Banking, agricultural produce, revenue and expenditure, the public debt, the civil service establishment, have all expanded in step with industrial expansion. On the other hand, landlessness, pauperism, and urban slums have also increased. The nearest approach to a "still" in this economic motion picture is provided by the wages of unskilled Bantu labourers, upon whose industry the South African economic superstructure has been reared.

Two facts of paramount importance have emerged during the last thirty years. In the first place has come the gradual and unpalatable realisation that South Africa is, in reality, a very poor country, living, for the moment, on its precious mineral wealth, which is itself a waning asset. In the second place, industrialisation has greatly increased the extent to which the economy of the country is based on low-paid Native labour. Every step in the direction of industrial expansion has increased the dependence of the European standard of living upon the labour that made that step possible. Mining expansion, railway construction, and the growth of secondary industries have all increased the weight to be borne by the Native worker, while very little has been done to ensure his continued social and economic ability to bear the added weight. Indeed, the tendency has been to use legislative power to prevent African labourers from improving their economic lot, and the familiar spectacle has thus been reproduced of a small wealthy class living on the industry of a large class of poverty-stricken workers. The economic structure has become dangerously top-heavy, depending precariously on a waning asset and a continued supply of low-paid labour.

Another important tendency must be noted. Before 1910 South Africa was almost entirely dependent on capital from overseas, largely from Great Britain ; but one of the results of industrialisation has been to increase the supply of local capital and thus to reduce the extent to which British capitalists are able to exploit the country. Since 1910, for example, the number of gold-mining shares held in the Union has increased from 10% to 40% of the whole. Again, at the time of Union

the public debt was £114,000, of which £106,000,000 was held abroad; to-day<sup>1</sup> the debt is £255,000,000, of which only £103,000,000 is held abroad. In other words, the internal debt has increased from 9% to 60% of the total debt. These examples will serve to indicate the extent to which South Africa has become more independent for her supply of capital since union, and to show that an indigenous industrial capitalism has come into being; the exploitation of the wealth and labour of South Africa is no longer the prerogative of Great Britain. Indeed, South African capital is increasingly being used to finance mining and other enterprise in other parts of Southern Africa. At the same time these examples should not obscure the fact that the country still has a large overseas debt, that dividends on railway investments of fifty years ago are still being paid, and that millions of pounds still go annually from the mines to British shareholders. As recently as 1939 a Nationalist Member of Parliament urged the Minister of Finance to borrow overseas for Government needs, since the supply of local capital for industrial undertakings was limited. Coming from the Nationalist Party, the burden of whose complaint has always been that the country is too greatly dependent on British shareholders, this is an illuminating fact, and should encourage those British capitalists who may have gloomily supposed that South Africa was being lost to the Empire.

## 2. THE WORKERS

Parallel to the development of industries in South Africa is the growth of labour organisations. We must, at the outset, understand that European labour and non-European labour are sharply distinguished and that the European labourer considers himself primarily as a European and only secondarily as a member of the working-class. When South Africans speak about the "Labour Movement" they refer to European, or, as it is sometimes delightfully called, "civilised", labour. It is significant of the gulf that exists between white and black workers that of the two great strikes of European workers one was to prevent the mines from increasing the ratio of non-European to European employees. Also, the so-called "Colour Bar" Act was passed at the instigation of the European workers.

European Trade Unions, modelled on the movement in Great Britain, grew rapidly after union, and were able to call a General Strike in 1914. The Government replied by calling out 60,000 burgher troops, and the strike leaders had to surrender, nine of them being deported, without a trial, by General Smuts. In 1922 the Rand Revolution occurred. Faced by increasing costs and decreasing profits, the mine-owners cut wages and threatened to replace highly-paid European by low-paid Native labour. The miners offered to negotiate, but the

<sup>1</sup> These are pre-war figures (1939). War finance is increasing the volume of internal debt.

Chamber of Mines forced the issue by breaking off negotiations and resorting to a lock-out. Then a small group of Communists managed to obtain control of the Mine Workers' Union, and, by calling out other workers, were for a few days in actual possession of the Witwatersrand. After severe fighting, in which 230 lives were lost (almost twice as many as were lost in conquering German South-West Africa), the Government forces gained the upper hand. The miners now repudiated the Communist lead and went back to work on the terms of the Chamber of Mines plus Government promises of legislation. In all this the Native workers had taken no real part, nor did it occur to the European miners that a strike of 20% of the workers had little chance of success. Since 1922 there has been a slight tendency on the part of European Trade Unions to recognise the need for including all workers within their ranks; but the extent of this recognition is so small as to be negligible, and the big Unions are solidly entrenched behind a colour bar.

Immediately after the Great War African industrial workers began to organise their own Trade Unions. It will be explained later that Native workers in South Africa are in a somewhat similar position to that occupied by British workers more than a century ago; legally they have no right to strike, and their Unions do not receive the official recognition accorded to European Trade Unions.<sup>1</sup> In spite of restrictive legislation, Bantu Unions flourished for a while after 1920, but the early efforts at organisation are reminiscent of the Labour movement in England in the thirties of last century. The workers were ignorant, and their leaders were either too ambitious or else self-seeking demagogues who persuaded the workers to part with subscriptions in exchange for extravagant promises. These movements will be dealt with later.

### 3. POLITICAL PARTIES

Though other factors enter into the story, the history of political parties in the Union since 1910 is a reflection of the changing economic conditions. Two threads, often interwoven, run through the story; the growth of nationalism and the relationship between European and non-European. Let us deal with nationalism first.

General Botha, as leader of the South African Party, became the first Prime Minister of the Union, and his Cabinet included General Hertzog and General Smuts. His party was composed of most of the Afrikaans-speaking, and a fair number of English-speaking, South Africans; the Opposition was provided by the Unionist Party, almost entirely English in speech and outlook, and a sprinkling of Labourites representing the skilled European workers from the Rand. Botha's policy was one of conciliation between English and Afrikaners; in practice this meant

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written official recognition of African Trade Unions has been granted. It remains to be seen whether this involves the right to strike.

assuring the English that the Boers were now in the Empire and that Imperial interests would be safe in the hands of the ex-Boer Generals. Within two years General Hertzog, backed by the Orange Free State and by sections in the Transvaal and Cape Province, found himself unable to stomach a policy that seemed to him to deny to the Afrikaner his linguistic and cultural rights. He stumped the country with the slogan of "South Africa First", and demanded that more Afrikaners should be appointed to the public service and that the Afrikaans language should receive proper recognition in public life; he maintained that English and Afrikaners could never co-operate until each acknowledged and respected the other's traditions and culture, and that that respect would never be accorded as long as General Botha was content to conciliate the imperialists. General Hertzog was largely justified in his attitude, but that did not, of course, prevent him from being roundly accused of preaching racialism. General Botha dropped his turbulent colleague from the Cabinet in 1912, and so an Afrikaans party came into being, pledged to look after the interests of that section of the community from which it drew its main voting strength, the *Platteland* or rural areas. An Afrikaans Press was established, and in every department of life—education, the business world, the professions, and, above all, the Dutch Reformed Church—a revival of nationalist feeling set in. The move in politics coincided with and greatly strengthened a revival of the Afrikaans language and literature, and this in its turn helped to give vigour to the new political party.

The outbreak of the Great War and the attack on South-West Africa by Union troops provided an opportunity for a rebellion which, though officially frowned upon by General Hertzog and by ex-President Steyn, greatly accelerated the growth of nationalism. When the rebellion was crushed by the Botha Government the new Nationalist Party was born, and it placed the establishment of a republic in South Africa in the forefront of its programme. As the new party grew, General Botha was more and more compelled to lean on the Unionists in order to carry out his policy of supporting the Empire at war and of fighting republicanism. After the War an alliance between the South African Party and the Unionists, between English and Afrikaners, was managed by General Smuts, upon whom the mantle of General Botha had fallen; but he lost a number of Afrikaner supporters in the process, and at the elections of 1924 his party was defeated by a combination of Nationalists and Labourites who formed a Government under General Hertzog.

This Pact, as it was called, between an ultra-Afrikaner party and a Labour Party whose leaders and most intelligent followers could hardly speak Afrikaans, may seem strange at first sight. The Nationalist Party had a Native policy that included segregation, though few of its members knew what it meant; it aimed at a republican form of government; it had opposed South Africa's participation in the Great War; it represented

agricultural rather than industrial interests. The Labour Party, led by Colonel Creswell, had rallied to the Empire; its members were English by tradition and culture, and they knew little or nothing about the *platteland*. What was it, then, that by cutting clean across racial lines forced two such strange partners into coalition? It was partly a common hatred of General Smuts, whom the Nationalists regarded as the arch-imperialist, the "handyman of the Empire", and whom the Labourites remembered as the man who had deported nine labour leaders without a trial and had supported the Chamber of Mines in the strike of 1922. In the second place, both Nationalists and Labourites were agreed that a Colour Bar was necessary if the standards of "white" civilisation were to be maintained. In other words, the Native policy of the Nationalist Party suited the Trade Unionists, who were far from being Socialists. The Nationalists agreed to drop republicanism for the time being, and the Labourites agreed not to be awkward about non-European labour conditions.

In office the Nationalist-Labour combine proved to be much less dangerous than the mining and industrial interests had feared. Nor was the British investor in any way harmed by the advent to power of an anti-imperialist Government. In fact, some of General Hertzog's followers soon began to complain that he was himself succumbing to the imperialist embrace, and to justify himself to his *platteland* supporters he insisted, at the 1926 Imperial Conference, that the question of South Africa's status should be thoroughly discussed and, imperatively, that a document should place the matter beyond dispute. When Generals Botha and Smuts had returned from the Peace Conference at Versailles with the strange news that South Africa was now virtually independent and that the new thing, Dominion status, proved it, the Nationalists had laughed them to scorn. A popular cartoon depicted a monkey tied to a pole (the Empire) as of old, but the chain had now been lengthened. This, said the Nationalists, was the much-vaunted Higher Status. Once he himself was in power, therefore, General Hertzog had to do something to give an air of reality to the status at which he had mocked, and so Lord Balfour was persuaded to be so un-British as to set down the constitutional position of the Empire in writing. Armed with this document, General Hertzog returned to the *platteland* and tried to persuade his party that Dominion Status could now be accepted without fear of damaging the Afrikaner spirit. To make assurance doubly sure, the next quadriennial Imperial Conference produced the Statute of Westminster, a document that has since proved a fruitful source of argument to politicians and constitutionalists alike. Dr. van der Merwe,<sup>1</sup> the then Nationalist leader in the Free State, and Mr. Pirow both quoted Prof. Keith on the Statute, the one to prove that the Union is bound, the other that she is free. Neither quoted the more potent authority, the British

<sup>1</sup> Dr. van der Merwe had since died.

creditors of the Union, nor did they give much publicity to another aspect of the Statute of Westminster, namely the question of Colonial stock. During the 19th century a series of Colonial Stock Acts was passed by the British Parliament to guarantee the interest of British investors in colonial enterprise. A condition of the Statute of Westminster was that the Union Government should continue this guarantee, which it did by the Colonial Stock Act 1900 Declaration Act of 1934, thus safeguarding the essence of Empire.

By 1932 the pressure from the extreme Nationalist wing was becoming too much for General Hertzog, and the country at large was tired of the artificial nature of political divisions. Vital questions of national policy, such as the advisability of remaining on or departing from the gold standard, were discussed in Parliament and in the country entirely on party-political lines—the Nationalists wanted to remain on gold because Britain had gone off, and the South African Party wanted to go off because the Nationalists wanted to remain on. General Hertzog, pressed by the extremists under two ex-Dutch Reformed Church ministers, Dr. Malan and Dr. van der Merwe, now discovered that he had completed the task begun in 1912 of saving the Afrikaner. The Afrikaans language was safe, the country was independent, the equality of Afrikaner and English was recognised, and the Union had her own flag, though not yet her own National Anthem; why, then, continue to tilt at windmills? So he joined hands with General Smuts, and a United Party was formed. The extreme Afrikaners refused to follow General Hertzog, and formed a new or “purified” Nationalist Party under Dr. Malan; on the other wing Colonel Stallard led a handful of followers into the new Dominion Party, which regards itself as the watch-dog of Imperialism in South Africa, bound to bark whenever the Flag or the British National Anthem seems to be in danger. Seldom have watch-dogs of Empire been less necessary, for, however much South African politicians may strut and posture, the country is more closely bound to Britain than ever. The Purified Nationalists are once more full-blooded republicans, and have now added Semitism, liberalism, and communism to the list of -isms that they abhor. In 1939 they received a slight accession of strength in the shape of the Grey Shirt, or South African Nazi, movement, which found that it was unnecessary to have two similar organisations in the field.

Out of Nationalism comes forth imperialism; and as capitalism has grown in South Africa, so nationalism is developing into imperialism; an indigenous capitalism is breeding an indigenous imperialism among the members of all parties. The desire for the British Protectorates and the determination to retain South-West Africa are symptoms of this, but a discussion on these matters must be deferred to a later chapter.

On the outbreak of war, in September 1939, a crisis occurred in the Cabinet and in Parliament. General Smuts favoured an immediate declaration of war against Germany, and General Hertzog, supported



by his own original followers and by the Nationalist Party, declared in favour of what he described as benevolent neutrality. Poland, he said, was not worth going to war about, and, in any case, the present situation was due to the Treaty of Versailles, which had wronged the Germans. General Smuts carried the day by a narrow majority, and General Hertzog asked for a dissolution of Parliament to test the feeling of the country. The Governor-General, constitutionally advised by what was now the strongest party, refused the dissolution, and called upon General Smuts to form a Government. For a few days after these critical events the country was in a ferment of emotionalism where almost anything might have happened; the Nationalists were jubilant, and expected General Hertzog and his followers to return to the true Afrikaner fold; monster demonstrations were held, and a republic was said to be close at hand. General Smuts, by dint of maintaining a masterly silence, allowed the two oppositions to cool down, and now they are finding that a closer union between General Hertzog's followers and those of Dr. Malan is not going to be plain sailing; for six years these two groups conducted a political civil war that was as bitter as civil war only can be. South African politics have always turned on persons rather than on principles; and the obstinate personalities involved in the present issue will add greatly to the difficulties of forming an Afrikaner bloc. General Hertzog is much more moderate than Dr. Malan, and has, since his resignation, stated publicly that he is not prepared to agree with the rabid anti-Semitic and anti-British policy favoured by the true Nationalists. Whatever happens, the two Afrikaner groups will probably not win a general election against the combination that follows General Smuts.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. EUROPEAN AND NON-EUROPEAN

The other thread that runs through the history of South Africa since 1910 is the relationship between European and non-European, between

<sup>1</sup> This was written in November 1939, and remains largely true. A few detailed changes may be noted. Shortly after his resignation General Hertzog and his life-long colleague, Mr. Havenga, were ignominiously evicted from the Nationalist Party, and formed the Afrikaner Party, with a following of some sixteen M.P.'s. This party was democratic, but opposed to the Union's participation in the war. For a time it eked out a precarious existence between the two main parties, but in 1941 (November) General Hertzog emerged for a few hours from the seclusion of his farm and, to the surprise and disgust of most of his followers, declared himself in favour of National Socialism. Mr. Havenga's group is now Hertzogite without Hertzog!

At the same time a serious quarrel developed inside the Nationalist Party between Dr. Malan on the one hand and Mr. Pirow and Dr. van Rensburg on the other. (They are, respectively, leaders of the New Order or Nazi group and of the Ossewa Brandwag.) General Hertzog's declaration was really a move in this quarrel, he having been "captured" by Mr. Pirow. The quarrel continues (1942) with ferocity, and bears out what was said above about the difficulties of forming an Afrikaner bloc.

the European governing-class and the Cape Coloured, the Indian, and the Bantu working class.

The policy of all Governments up till the present has been to maintain the political position of the mixed race, known as the Cape Coloured people, half-way between the European and the African. In his own home, the Western Province of the Cape, he has political and municipal rights, and, while there is strong social ostracism, he may buy property on the same terms as Europeans. He is admitted to European Trade Unions, though in 1939 the United Party Government refused to approve the nomination of a Coloured worker on the labour delegation to Geneva. No Government has so far attempted to interfere with the existing state of affairs, though there is now (1939) such a strong Nationalist Party agitation for social segregation in the towns that the present Government will probably bow before the storm; already it has proposed to introduce legislation empowering municipalities, under certain safeguards, to set aside definite areas for the Coloured population.

Indian indentured labour had been recruited for the sugar plantations in Natal since 1860, but in 1911 the Government of India put a stop to a system that was thoroughly evil. By this time there were, of course, large numbers of Indians who knew no other home but South Africa, where their rights were restricted and where, once they had served their indentures, they were regarded as an economic menace to the Europeans. They were not allowed to reside in the Free State; and in the Transvaal they might reside, but were forbidden to own land, a difficulty which they largely overcame by the formation of land companies or by persuading a European to act as nominal owner. By 1911, under the leadership of Gandhi, the Natal Indians began to agitate for their rights, and the Union Government, in alarm, proposed legislation to limit further immigration of Indians. Gandhi's passive resistance campaign, and strikes of Indians on the plantations, resulted in an agreement between General Smuts and Gandhi which was embodied in the Relief Act; but Indians were still discriminated against in the matter of trading licences, the ownership of property and in free movement between provinces. And, although free entry into the Union had been stopped by the Immigration Act, the Indian population increased, and Indian trading stores in Natal and in the Transvaal were a growing source of envy to the Europeans. Municipalities, especially on the Rand, complained that the Indian habit of sub-letting rooms produced insanitary slum conditions, and that the value of town property depreciated as Indians entered. Parliament therefore tightened up the laws for the Transvaal, and in 1924 the Smuts Government introduced the Class Areas bill for segregating Indians throughout the Union; at the same time Natal deprived its Indians of the municipal franchise. The Class Areas bill was furiously opposed in India and in South Africa, but in the midst of the controversy the Government fell and handed the torch

of class legislation to the Nationalists and Labourites. In 1926 the Hertzog Government introduced an even more drastic bill; but it never reached the statute book, since direct negotiations with the Government of India were entered into, and in 1927 an agreement was reached which provided for a certain amount of assisted repatriation and pledged the Government to assist in the "uplift" of the Indian population. There the matter has rested until now (1939), when anti-Indian legislation is once more being threatened; it seems likely that this threat will be carried into effect during the 1940 session of Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

The Coloured and Indian problems are, in a measure, of local significance. The position of the Bantu is a national question that affects every phase of political, social, and economic life in the country. It is at once a problem of labour, of poverty, of race, and it is basic to the economic structure of the Union. So far, as will be abundantly clear from later chapters, no Government has dealt successfully with the question, and the record of legislation since Union is one of failure to grasp the main economic essentials of the situation, failure to utilise effectively South Africa's great assets of land and labour. The reason for this failure is not far to seek. The immediate and narrow economic needs of the European ruling class have consistently been paramount, and such benefits as have accrued to the Native population have been sops flung out from motives of fear or under pressure from a liberal European minority. European landowners, mining and industrial employers, European skilled and unskilled workers, have all been legislatively "protected" at the expense of the African, whose labour is exploited in the interests of the ruling class in South Africa and in Britain.

The history of Native policy since Union may conveniently be dealt with under three heads: the land, labour, and political and social rights. In 1913 the Botha Ministry took the first step in a territorial segregation policy by the Land Act of that year, which made it illegal for Natives or Europeans to own land outside defined separate areas. In practice this meant that Native ownership was confined to the then existing Reserves—about 8% of the area of the Union—together with such land as the Government might add to the Reserves. Since the Reserves were already overcrowded, the Beaumont Commission was set up to find the additional land required; it failed to do so, and some time later five local committees were set up to remedy the failure. But finding additional land involved expropriating European farms to expand the Reserves, and so much public opposition was raised to this proposal that the whole scheme was dropped, thus leaving the Africans the choice of moving into admittedly overcrowded Reserves or working for the Europeans. It took twenty more years before European public opinion saw the connection between passing a segregation law and providing the

<sup>1</sup> The war, and particularly the present (1942) need to conciliate Indian opinion, has postponed this.

land necessary to put that law into effect; by that time, of course, the difficulties of finding land had greatly increased and the price of land had doubled and trebled.

When General Hertzog's Nationalist Party climbed to power on the back of the Labour Party he set to work to provide a comprehensive Native policy that was to include land segregation and the representation of Natives in Parliament, also on the basis of segregation; but his bills had to be dropped since he failed to obtain the requisite two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament, required by the Act of Union, for a change in the franchise. Finally, after the two Generals had formed what might be called a National Government, the Land and Trust Act was passed in 1936, and, at long last, provision was made for the purchase of areas for the exclusive use of Natives. It had thus taken twenty-three years from the time when South Africa had first decided that Africans might not legally own land in areas reserved for Europeans till the time when she grudgingly set aside inadequate Reserves where the Bantu might farm for themselves.

As regards labour, two objects were aimed at by Parliament. In the first place, an adequate supply of low-paid labour was required for the farms, the mines, and the newly developing industries; and, in the second place, that labour must be controlled in such a way that it remained docile, that it did not lower European wage standards, and that it did not threaten the employment of a growing class of poor white labour that was drifting into the towns from the rural areas.

Shortage of land for Natives and comparatively heavy taxation were powerful incentives to the Bantu to seek work among the Europeans; but, even so, there was a constant need of more Native labour, and the recruiting agencies had to go outside the Union for workers for the mines. In the British Protectorates the mines had the assistance of the Imperial Government, and high taxation combined with active recruiting was so successful that labour power soon became the chief export of the Protectorates, as of the Native Reserves in the Union. In regard to labour from Portuguese territory, the Union Government itself acted as recruiting agent for the mine-owners, and negotiated an agreement with the Portuguese Government that now produces about 80,000 Native workers a year from East Africa. The policy of fostering secondary industries also acted, incidentally, as a recruiting agent for African labour; for, by sheltering the manufacturers behind tariff walls, the Government not only enabled the new industries to compete successfully with overseas rivals, but it also forced up the price of consumers' goods to such an extent that Natives were compelled to seek cash wages in industrial employment.

In all these efforts to obtain Native labour for the mines and industries the interests of agriculture in the matter of labour were not neglected. Farmers are heavily represented in Parliament, and were able to look after

themselves' by seeing to it that no legislation designed to regulate wages or control employment should apply to farm labour, by maintaining antiquated and unjust pass regulations and masters and servants laws, and by generously subsidising agriculture by means of tariffs, railway rates, and export bounties, the benefits of which were not felt by the agricultural labourers. Also, use was made of an Urban Areas Act, designed to control urban Natives, to prevent the flow of labour from the farms; and the fact that farmers are now complaining of a labour shortage is not the fault of the Union Parliament so much as of their own uneconomic habits and of the world-wide *malaise* from which agriculture suffers under capitalist methods of production.

To keep Native labour docile a host of laws and regulations existed in pre-Union days. To these were added regulations under the Urban Areas Act and a Riotous Assemblies Act, while Colour Bar legislation, such as the Mines and Works Act, the Apprenticeship Act and the Industrial Conciliation Act, combined effectively to keep the Native in his economic place and to prevent him from competing with Europeans for skilled and even for unskilled jobs. The first Nationalist Government, with their labour allies, inaugurated the "civilised" labour policy of subsidising European unskilled labour in Government, municipal, provincial, and industrial undertakings. The subsidies came from general revenue, a proportion of which is paid by the Natives themselves, who thus paid taxes to enable the Government to pay higher wages to Poor Whites who replace the Natives—a pretty circle. This system is still in partial operation. One Act of the Nationalist Government contained no Colour Bar. That was the Wage Board Act, which set up wage-fixing machinery for unskilled and unorganised labour, white or black; but the Act works so laboriously that not many Natives have so far benefited by it.

The last point to be noticed in connection with Native policy since Union is the matter of political rights. At the time of Union the vote was obtainable by all alike in the Cape Province, where an educational and property test kept the number of Africa voters low. Nevertheless, that vote was the controlling factor in 30% of the Cape constituencies. In the Transvaal and Free State no non-European might vote, and in Natal the conditions under which a Native might be enfranchised were so difficult that, for practical purposes, that Province might be classed with the voteless ex-Republics. Liberal statesmen in England had hoped that liberty would "broaden down from precedent to precedent", and that the northern provinces would follow the example of the Cape. The reverse process has taken place, and the flame of liberty in the Cape, instead of spreading to the north, has itself begun to flicker feebly. As soon as the Nationalist Government took office for the first time a determined onslaught on the Native franchise in the Cape began. General Hertzog's first bills proposed to deprive the Cape Natives of their vote

and to allow the Natives of the whole Union to elect, by indirect means, seven members, who were not to have full parliamentary powers. The most ardent opponents of this proposal were the voteless Natives in the northern provinces, who declared they would rather wait fifty years for the franchise than see their brothers at the Cape deprived of their votes. Since a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament was required for the passage of this bill, a liberal minority was able to defeat it; but a year or two later the scales were weighted more heavily against the African by a franchise law abolishing the qualifications for European men and enfranchising European women.

In 1935 the reshuffled United Party agreed upon a new measure which, while not disenfranchising the existing Cape Native voters, greatly reduced their influence by placing them on a separate electoral roll and allowing them to elect three Members of Parliament; at the same time all the Natives in the Union were to be represented by four Senators, indirectly elected.

In the sphere of Native administration the years since Union have been marked by the continuous growth of the powers and functions of the Native Affairs Department. More and more Parliament has delegated powers to the Department, and government by regulation has become common. The Native Administration Act of 1927 was the coping-stone of this policy, and provides for government in the Reserves along lines very different from those laid down for European areas; that this policy has not been wholly to the benefit of the Native population will appear later.

## 5. SOUTH AFRICA TO-DAY

This very brief account of some of the most important tendencies in South African history may best be concluded by a summary statement of the salient economic facts in the present-day condition of South Africa.

The area of the Union is 472,550 square miles, or five times that of Great Britain. About one-third of this area is classified as desert shrub and has a low rainfall and sparse population; there is a small amount of forest, and the remainder of the country is parkland or grassland of medium agricultural and pastoral value. The mineral wealth, and particularly the gold, of the Transvaal saves the country from being classified as poor, or just above subsistence level. Without that wealth the extensive railway system would have been economically impracticable; and there are no navigable rivers, as in the United States, to take the place of railways. When the British Government decided, in the middle of the 19th century, to abandon the Free State and Transvaal, their Commissioners described the country as fit for buck only; from the point of view of the investing public that was a just description until the discovery of diamonds and gold falsified it. In most parts of the country the rainfall is precarious,

and the whole highveld is subject to periodic droughts that add considerably to the risks of agriculture. Not infrequently, too, the droughts are followed by floods that cause extensive damage to crops and stock.

This somewhat gloomy picture of the climate and agricultural value of the Union is given in an attempt to dissipate the prevalent idea that South Africa is an extremely wealthy country. Looking on the brighter side, agriculturally, it may be noted that the country has 40 million sheep to Australia's 112 millions and the United Kingdom's 25 million; it has 11 million head of cattle and produces close on 3 million tons of maize a year. On the other hand, the Union lacks many of the most important raw materials, such as rubber, oil, cotton, and the non-ferrous metals, and has only small quantities of others.

South Africa has a population of 9½ million people classified under four racial heads, Bantu, European, Cape Coloured, and Asiatic. The numbers are as follows:—

TABLE I.  
*Total Population of the Union According to Races (1936).*  
(Round numbers).

Bantu . . . . .	6½ million.
European . . . . .	2 „
Cape Coloured . . . . .	½ „
Asiatic . . . . .	¼ „

These four racial groups are distinct to such an extent that they form different classes, though each class is itself sub-divided according to economic condition. In most official publications of the Union, such as the *Official Year Book*, a distinction is drawn between the four groups, and statistics of such matters as wages, employment, education, public health, are shown separately. Sometimes the distinction is simply between European and non-European, and in many cases, such as mortality figures or health statistics, figures for Europeans only are available, with the natural result that the Union makes a brave showing in international comparisons. (The United Kingdom might achieve equally happy results by omitting slum and distressed areas.) By law a quinquennial census must be taken of the European population and a decennial census of the whole population. This practice serves further to obscure the facts. In 1931, when a decennial census was due to be held, the Government decided to exclude non-Europeans on the ground of expense, and so there are no intermediate figures for the non-European population between 1921 and 1936.<sup>1</sup> This has enabled South African politicians to generalise on insufficient data with the knowledge that their statements

<sup>1</sup> This happened again in 1941! The latest complete figures are, therefore, those quoted in this book—the 1936 figures.

were not subject to the normal tests for accuracy. It must, of course, be remembered that the lack of literacy among non-Europeans, and their suspicions of any form of enumeration, make the taking of a census a difficult matter. As things are now, the actual differences in economic condition and social habits between the racial groups is so great that, quite apart from the absence of official figures for all the groups, it is best to consider them separately first and to combine them whenever possible for the sake of comparison.

Taking the whole of the 9½ million inhabitants, then, the density of population is 20·29 per square mile. The racial analysis of density is shown in the tables II, III and IV.

In order to understand what lies behind these tables, certain facts must be borne in mind. According to the land laws of the Union, the Bantu may own land, individually or collectively, only in certain Reserves in each province. This will be explained more fully later, and it is sufficient at this stage to state that 13% of the area of the Union is available for Bantu occupation, while 87% is for European use. The density

TABLE II.

*Racial Density per Square Mile in the Four Provinces (1936).*

	Cape.	Natal.	Free State.	Transvaal.	Union.
Non-Europeans . . .	9·88	49·79	11·50	22·82	16·05
Europeans . . .	2·86	5·40	4·05	7·43	4·24
Total . . .	12·74	55·19	15·55	30·25	20·29

TABLE III.

*Distribution of Population According to Provinces and Races (1936).*

(Round numbers).

	Cape.	Natal.	Free State.	Transvaal.
Bantu . . . . .	2,045,000	1,553,000	553,000	2,444,000
European . . . . .	791,000	190,000	200,000	820,000
Coloured . . . . .	682,000	18,000	17,029	50,000
Asiatic . . . . .	10,000	183,000	29	25,000
Total . . . . .	3,528,000	1,944,000	770,058	3,339,000
Area in square miles . .	277,169	35,284	49,647	110,450



TABLE IV.

*Proportion of Races in Urban and in Rural Areas (1936).*

	Proportion per cent. of each race.			Percentage distribution of races.		
	Urban.	Rural.	Total.	Urban.	Rural.	Total.
Bantu . . . . .	37.93	82.90	68.79	17.31	82.69	100
European . . . . .	43.44	10.58	20.89	65.24	34.76	100
Coloured . . . . .	13.79	5.39	8.03	53.91	46.09	100
Asiatic . . . . .	4.84	1.13	2.29	66.27	33.73	100
Total . . . . .	100	100	100	31.38	68.62	100

*Note.*—This table should be read across, thus: 37.93% of the total population in urban areas is Bantu, 82.90% of the total rural population is Bantu, and 68.79% of the total population is Bantu; of the Bantu population, 17.31% is urban and 82.69% is rural.

of population in the Reserves will thus be far greater than is shown in the official tables. It is estimated, for example, that in the Cape Native Reserves the density is almost 70 per square mile; in the Transvaal it is about 90, and in the Free State and Natal it is probably more. If these figures are compared with the official figures given in Table II, it will be seen at once that the population of the Reserves is considerably more dense than for the rest of the Union—a fact which is obscured by the official figures.

In so far as Table IV concerns Europeans, Coloureds, and Asiatics it needs no explanation. A proportion of each race live in towns, and the rest on farms, either as owners or as labourers. With the distribution of the Bantu population, however, further information is necessary to understand the position. This is given in the next table.

TABLE V.

*Distribution of Bantu Population (1936).*

	Male.	Female.	Total.
In Reserves . . . . .	1,236,300	1,726,096	2,962,396
In European urban areas . . . . .	440,320	384,141	824,461
In European rural areas . . . . .	1,062,678	1,133,057	2,195,735
In mining and industrial compounds . . . . .	573,353	40,744	614,097
Totals . . . . .	3,312,651	3,284,038	6,596,689

The position shown in Table V is that of the day of the census in May 1936, and may be interpreted, in round numbers, by saying that 2·9 million Bantu live in Reserves, mostly by subsistence farming; over 2·2 million live on farms, belonging to Europeans, Asiatics, or Coloureds, where the adults are employed as farm labourers; and about 1·4 million live in urban areas, where the adults are employed in mining, industrial, and other occupations. It would be a serious mistake, however, to suppose that this was in any way a stable position. As will be clear later, there is a constant flow of Bantu population backwards and forwards between the Reserves and the rural and urban areas. Finally, it should be noted for future reference that females predominate in the Reserves and males in the mining and industrial compounds.

About one-third of the total population of the Union is urban, and it is important to know how this population is distributed. This is shown in the following table:—

TABLE VI.  
*Distribution of Urban Population by Race (1936).*

Size of Town.	No.	Total population.	Non-European.	European.
500,000 and over . . .	1	519,384	261,713	257,671
250,000—500,000 . . .	2	603,829	335,384	268,445
100,000—250,000 . . .	2	238,462	108,066	130,396
50,000—100,000 . . .	8	534,849	349,839	185,010
25,000—50,000 . . .	4	160,105	105,993	54,112
10,000—25,000 . . .	13	209,014	123,471	85,543
5,000—10,000 . . .	27	211,790	122,024	89,766
2,500—5,000 . . .	70	241,626	141,878	99,748
Under 2,500 . . .	328	341,793	191,489	150,304
Total . . .	455	3,060,852	1,739,857	1,320,995

It will be seen that about one-third of the urban population, European and non-European, lives in three out of the 455 towns, and almost half the urban population lives in the five largest towns. Only one town reaches a population of half-a-million, and about 70% of the towns in the Union have less than 2,500 inhabitants of all races. The urban population is thus highly concentrated, and the large majority of centres classed as towns are really villages. The three large towns where one-third of the population is concentrated are Cape Town, where the largest non-European group is the Coloured, Durban, where it is Asiatic, and Johannesburg, where it is Bantu.

Of the four racial groups none is linguistically homogeneous. Asiatics

speak various dialects, and use English in their dealings with Europeans; the Coloured people regard themselves as Afrikaans-speaking, but their conversation is, as a rule, so interlarded with mispronounced and curiously accented English words that they may almost be said to have a dialect of their own, and the gist of what they are saying may frequently be gathered by someone with no knowledge of Afrikaans. The Bantu languages are usually divided into four main groups, though there are many dialects; but all Natives who come into contact, as wage-earners, with Europeans have at least a smattering of English or Afrikaans or both. A small number of Natives speak English and Afrikaans well.

The broad linguistic division of the European group is shown by the following table :—

TABLE VII.

*Classification of Europeans According to Language (1936).*

66%	of the total population is classed as bilingual.
53%	of the urban population has English as a mother tongue.
41%	of the urban population has Afrikaans as a mother tongue.
14%	of the rural population has English as a mother tongue.
84%	of the rural population has Afrikaans as a mother tongue.

So far we have dealt with the population racially; but the fact that such phrases as "civilised labour" and "white-labour policy" are part of the South African political vocabulary is proof that racial and economic boundaries are apt to overlap. Many Asiatics belong racially to one class but are economically members of the employing class; and though the overwhelming majority of Bantu are workers or peasants, there is a small but distinct middle-class of commercial and professional men and women growing up among them. Finally, many Europeans belong to the poorest economic class. Official figures give very little direct indication of how the wealth of the nation is distributed, but certain facts enable us to form a picture that is true in its main outlines.

The national income of South Africa in 1937 was probably about £360,000,000,<sup>1</sup> or £38 per head of population, and of this amount at least £30,000,000 is earned by absentee shareholders, largely in Britain. These shareholders would therefore have to rank as part of the higher economic class of South Africa, and their dividends immediately reduce the income available in the Union by about £3 per head of population.

In 1937 61,000 taxpayers were assessed on a total taxable income of £80,000,000; if allowance is made for rebates, this probably means an

<sup>1</sup> Since then the national income has greatly increased, largely owing to the War. It may possibly be reckoned at about £450,000,000. This does not affect the argument, since the proportions have not changed and since war-time finance is so abnormal as to be an inadequate guide.

income of £100,000,000. In the same year 2,400 companies were assessed on an income of £52,000,000. Taking these facts of national income and taxation into account and making due allowance for overlapping incomes, we arrive at something like the following: about 2% of the population have family incomes of more than £400 per year and between them take about half the national income; probably another 17% have family incomes of between £100 and £400 and take about 22% of the national income; another 20% have between £50 and £100 per year and take about 10% of the national income; and the remaining 61% enjoy family incomes of less than £50 per year (or less than £1 per week) and take only 12% of the national income. When we consider the super-tax payers we may make the further statement that about  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the population goes off with 7% of the total income.

The following table throws further light on this matter:—

TABLE VIII.  
*Spread of Wage-incomes over the Races.*

Wage Group.	Percent- age of Workers.	Bantu Percent- age.	Coloured or Asiatic Percent- age.	European Percent- age.
£9-£36 p.a. . . .	55	90	10	Nil
£36-£60 „ . . .	23	66	26	8
£60-£120 „ . . .	10	28	42	30
£120-£240 „ . . .	8	4	25	71
£240-£500 „ . . .	4	Nil	2	98

It will be noticed that 78% of the wage-earners here taken receive less than £60 per year, while 55% receive between £9 and £36 per year, or between 3s. 6d. and 14s. per week.

From these figures of national income and wages we may draw several conclusions. In the first place, the working-class is divided between European and non-European workers, and of the latter the lowest in the scale are the Bantu. In the second place, there is a fairly large class of European, possibly about 5% of the European population, that is economically in the same class as the Bantu. In the third place, a relatively small class of European is well-off, and, in company with British shareholders, exploits both European and non-European labour.

A word must, finally, be said about the European agricultural class, which consists largely of landowners. The rural areas contain 35% of the European population and contribute about 4% of the direct tax on personal incomes; there is no land tax in South Africa, and the income

tax for farmers is light and is easily evaded. It is a stock joke that farmers are able to manipulate their tax returns so as to show losses, while professional people are unable to do so. The amount of taxable incomes returned by farmers represents a fraction only of their real incomes. Their Native labourers are not in such fortunate case, and not infrequently pay more direct tax than the landowner who employs them. The farmers, then, contribute relatively little to national revenue, they exploit the labour of non-European farm labourers, and are themselves in turn the victims of poor markets, of uneconomic methods of farming, and of exploitation by commercial rings and trusts. Being strongly represented in Parliament, they are able to help themselves liberally in the matter of railway rates, tariffs, bounties and subsidies, and thus to avoid for themselves the worst evils of a top-heavy and crazy economic structure.

Such, in broad outlines, is the picture the details of which we shall proceed to examine in the following chapters.

### CHAPTER III

## THE RESERVES

### I. AREA AND POPULATION

**I**F you belong to the 32% of the population of the Union that has its home in the Reserves you will find that, on an average, you will share the square mile of land that has to support you with about 65 other people, with 80 head of cattle, 70 woolled sheep, and 65 non-woolled sheep and goats. In that case you would, of course, comfort yourself with the thought that you were a Native in your native land. If, on the other hand, Nature had endowed you with a white skin and an urge to farm, you would find that you had, thoughtfully, been provided with much more elbow-room and that your square mile of South African soil would be shared by one other European, by 14 Natives employed by you and him, and by only 20 head of cattle, 8 woolled sheep, and 3 non-woolled sheep and goats. Of course, in some parts of the country there would be a few more Europeans trampling on your corns; but, on the other hand, you could, if you chose, move to a region where you would have more than a square mile to yourself. The Bantu can never move to such a region. It must be added that if you are a European agriculturalist you will, quite rightly, complain that the besetting sin of the Natives is overstocking of their land.

All this is another way of saying that the area of the Union is marked off into two kinds of territory: the Reserves, where Natives only may own land, and the rest, where Europeans—and to a very small extent Col-

oureds and Asiatics—only may possess the soil they till. The proportion of the area of the Union reserved for Native occupation is about 13%, or rather, it will be that when the Government has bought the additional land provided for in 1936. This means that 66% of the inhabitants are legally debarred from owning land on 87% of South Africa.

To find out where the Reserves are situated one might take a population map of South Africa and find the densest rural areas. Alternatively, one might take a railway map and find the areas with the poorest transport services. It naturally does not pay to build railways for such poverty-stricken regions, but it is interesting to note that railways in the Union are State-controlled, and that many a mile of unprofitable railway track has been built to serve the European rural areas; also, railway rates are used consistently to subsidise European agriculture. The absence of adequate transport facilities reduces the selling power of the Reserves and forces the producers there on to a very narrow market.

The inhabitants of the Reserves are the Bantu. The word "Bantu", like the word "English", gives a linguistic rather than a racial description, and there are greater differences in language between some Bantu tribes than there are between, say, a Yorkshireman and a Londoner. It would really be better to describe the Natives as Africans, but this has the disadvantage that, in a bilingual country, the translated form, *Afrikaner*, has acquired a totally different meaning.

The Bantu consist of hundreds of tribes divided, for the sake of convenience, into the following four main language groups: the Nguni, which comprises such tribes as the Zulu, Xosa, and Pondo, found in the Cape Province, Natal, and the Transvaal; the Sotho group, found in Basutoland and in the Northern Transvaal; the Shanga-Tonga group in the North-eastern Transvaal; and the Venda of the Transvaal. These groups differ from each other in language and customs and preserve very strong tribal characteristics rooted deeply in their history. Thus, among the Nguni the word "family" has such an intricate social significance that a village is really a group of huts belonging to the same family group: among the Sotho, on the other hand, the conception of the family results in villages that consist of unrelated family groups. But the various tribes and groups have quite enough common characteristics to enable us to speak generally about the Bantu, especially when we deal with their economic situation. In the Reserves practically all the tribesmen are engaged in agriculture and keep cattle; the cattle kraal is, indeed, usually the centre of village life, and the religious and social significance of cattle is one of the strongest characteristics common to all Bantu tribes. Common, too, to all tribal Natives in the Reserves is the grinding poverty that forces large numbers of the adult males to seek work in European areas outside the Reserves.

## 2. MAKING A LIVING IN THE RESERVES

The agriculture that must provide a living for close on three million people in the Reserves is of a most primitive kind. Except for a small portion of the Transkei, land is communally held, and there is practically no fencing. The principal crops are maize and kaffir corn (sorghum), and the soil is scratched rather than ploughed; even if the inhabitants were willing to use more scientific methods of farming, poverty would effectively prevent them from acquiring the necessary implements. The absence of fencing and the continued cutting down of trees for fuel have produced soil erosion to such a degree that some parts of the Reserves have, within living memory, been reduced from good pasturage to semi-desert land.

Cattle are, to the Bantu, of social rather than of economic significance. It is probably true that, in earlier times and under the primitive subsistence economy practised by the Bantu, cattle were a convenient economic medium of barter and of wealth; possibly for this very reason a host of religious and social practices grew up round the possession of cattle. Thus, even to-day cattle are slaughtered for ceremonial purposes, at deaths, weddings, births, and fertility rites; above all, cattle are used in the *Lobola* system, by which, before marriage, the bridegroom hands over cattle to the bride's parents, not—as has so often been supposed by Europeans—as a price for the bride, but partly as compensation to the clan that is losing a bearer of children and partly to act as a fund for the support of the woman should she return to her parents for any reason, such as ill-treatment by her husband. It can easily be imagined that when this is the practical rôle of cattle, quantity rather than quality will be desirable, and the result will be gross over-stocking and a very poor class of animal—too poor for use in ploughing, and yielding little milk. In the Reserves, then, cattle are infrequently used for food and only slightly for ploughing, and a Native will sell his cattle only under the direst necessity. Further, there is an unequal distribution of wealth as represented by cattle, for a small class of comparatively wealthy Natives owns more cattle than the poor Native, who has insufficient for his needs. Here, too, there are class distinctions based on wealth, and, under communal grazing, the wealthy Native obviously receives more value from the land than the poor Native who owns a few head of cattle. It should be added that in the Chiskei the Africans have themselves decided on measures to limit stock, and so to improve it; it will take many years, however, before such small measures as the bulk of Native opinion will allow at the moment can have any marked effect.

In pre-European days the primitive agricultural and pastoral methods just described caused periodic failure of crops, and consequent hunger; but as long as there was plenty of land and labour available the system did not work too badly. European conquest and occupation of South

Africa have, however, continuously reduced the area available for pasture and ploughing, and European rule has resulted in an increased population to live on the reduced acreage; the labour power of the Reserves has also been drained to man the European-controlled industrial expansion. Fear of the spread of cattle diseases has compelled Government to resort to compulsory dipping of cattle; so that the number of Native-owned cattle has certainly increased, though the quality has declined. The evil results of a wasteful subsistence economy naturally increase in proportion as the amount of land available is reduced, since the land has no time to recover from its exhaustion. When population of man and beast grows as acreage is reduced, the deterioration of land and people is alarmingly accelerated and the carrying capacity of the land is still further reduced. It is in this vicious circle that the Native Reserves have been caught.

The Government's efforts to improve the standard of agriculture and of stock in the Reserves are impressive when set out against the efforts of administrations in other parts of Africa; but they shrink into insignificance when placed against the money spent in assisting agriculture among the European farmers. Natives have to pay for their own advancement, and the capital required for improving agricultural methods in the Reserves is not available, as it is in European areas. Between 1910 and 1936 £71,000,000 from loan account and £41,000,000 from revenue were spent on assisting European agriculture, and of the loan account expenditure £20,000,000 has been written off; in 1933 alone probably £7,000,000 was spent on European farming. During the same period, 1910-1936, it is doubtful whether £3,000,000 has been spent on agriculture in the Reserves, and that was paid for from Native taxation. It is, of course, the labour of the Bantu in South Africa that has made possible such expenditure on European agriculture.

It is not surprising that on European farms the owners and their Native workers produce about 900 lbs. of maize per head of total rural population, and about 50 lbs. of wool, while in the Bantu rural areas the production is 90 lbs. of maize and 3 lbs. of wool per head. Add to this that maize is the principal food crop of the Bantu and that on European farms the maize ration for Native workers is reckoned at 100 lbs. per head *per month*, and we soon see why under-production and under-nourishment are characteristic of the Reserves. We also begin to see why the Nationalist Party, which draws its chief support from the farmers, is opposed to making more land available for Natives; after all, if the Bantu could make a decent living in the Reserves, they would not work for European farmers or on the mines. It is well known that recruiting for the mines reaches its peak when there have been crop failures in the Reserves, or during what are officially known as the "hunger months". In a very real sense mining dividends depend on misery in the Reserves, and part of Britain's national income is derived from this misery of under-



nourishment and disease. The problem will not be solved simply by making more land available for unscientific production. Government efforts to provide dipping tanks, to employ agricultural demonstrators, to run agricultural farms, and to encourage the collective buying of implements will have to be increased a thousand-fold before any real impression will be made on the Reserves; and as the country is now governed the necessary capital will never be provided for this. If Lord Nuffield, for example, were to begin to provide it, he would be hounded out of the country for upsetting the labour market.

There are very few independent craftsmen in the Reserves, since a society based on a subsistence economy cannot afford them; there is a small amount of basket-making and pottery, and most mission stations, in addition to training craftsmen who will subsequently find employment in European areas, encourage home industries, such as spinning and weaving. But these industries cannot compete with the factories, and have a social rather than an economic value. The Government recently set up a Commission to investigate the possibilities of establishing industries in the Reserves; but so far nothing more has been heard of the Commission's report, in itself not a startling document. As with the provision of more land for Native occupation, so with the questions of transport, of marketing facilities, and of the development of industries: progressive development of the Reserves lessens the incentive of the inhabitants to seek work outside, and no Government that seriously undertook this matter would have the support of the employers of labour, the mines and the farms. Many South Africans are fond of talking about the Reserves as places where the Native "may develop along his own lines"; since those who use this phrase invariably oppose any public expenditure for the development of the Reserves, we are bound to conclude that the phrase is a mask to hide the real policy. That policy is to keep the Native in the Reserves as a primitive subsistence farmer and to prevent any development which will decrease his need to earn wages in industrial and agricultural employment in European areas. With this condition of public opinion extensive development of the Reserves will be a very slow progress—so slow that it is probable that the deterioration will be more rapid than the development.

It should be obvious by this that the Reserves are, in reality, a gigantic reservoir of labour where the Natives have not enough land for a living but just enough to enable many of them to regard the Reserves as a home, and, consequently, to accept lower wages among Europeans than if they were entirely landless. In effect the Reserves are subsidising wages in the rest of the Union, and thus enabling employers to pay lower wages; since those workers who come from the Reserves are able to accept lower wages because their wives and families are subsisting in the Reserves, the general standard of wages is lowered. The three British Protectorates play a similar rôle in depreciating wage standards in the Union.

To the European employer of labour it is desirable to maintain this happy balance—not too much land to make the Native independent and just sufficient to keep him quiet and to enable the employer to pay low wages. The policy of giving insufficient land and inadequate facilities to the Natives in the Reserves is like the truck system on a national scale; it is really giving the workers part of his wages in kind and part in cash. And the wage in kind costs the employer nothing.

As European civilisation affects the Bantu it naturally raises the standard of what he requires to satisfy his wants; these new wants, in the shape of European goods, can only be had for cash. To serve his needs there are European traders in the Reserves, and their stores display all the cheap goods that the Native has set his heart on. He is encouraged to incur debts, and the trader, in many cases a recruiting agent for the mines and paid on a *per capita* basis, explains to him that the only way he can liquidate his debt is to offer himself for a spell on the mines. No wonder the trade with Natives is often referred to as the “kaffir truck” trade.

Inadequacy of land and resources new cash needs of the inhabitants of the Reserves, and taxation, are the three means by which the Union sees to it that the Natives are not so contented that outside employment is unattractive to them. There is an expressive saying in Afrikaans that aptly describes the condition of the Natives in the Reserves: “*Te min om van te lewe, te veel om van dood te gaan*” (too little to live on, and too much to die from). But employers have forgotten that, while such a policy may at first produce labourers, it fails to produce healthy labourers; and in the long run this means a failure of labour supply.

### 3. POVERTY, HUNGER AND DISEASE

That the employers of labour are running things pretty close at the moment is shown by the fact that, of those adult males in the Reserves who offer themselves for mining, 25% are rejected as medically unfit. The Chamber of Mines appointed a private commission in 1938 to investigate nutritional problems in the Reserves, thus showing that the mine-owners, at any rate, are alive to the fact that the Reserves are beginning to fail as reservoirs of labour. Also, urged by liberal and medical opinion, the Government is now (1939) making arrangements to carry out a national nutrition survey to include all classes and races.

The diet in the Reserves is chiefly mealie meal (maize meal), wild spinach, and kaffir beer—a drink made from kaffir corn and maize, and in taste not unlike cider. To the large majority of inhabitants meat is a very occasional luxury, and the growing disproportion in ownership of cattle results in a decreasing supply of milk available for the average family. The diet of the ordinary family is, thus, starchy, almost completely deficient in protective food values, and insufficient to enable the people to perform continuous physical labour. Even of this inadequate

diet there is frequently a shortage. In the Transkei, for example, in a comparatively good year, 4 million lbs. of maize had to be imported to meet the shortage. In this same area, where conditions are probably as favourable as anywhere in the Reserves, a sample survey revealed that between 15% and 25% of children die during the first year, about 30% before the age of 2 years, and about 60% before the age of 18 years. When these figures are borne in mind the statement made above that 25% of applicants for the mines are rejected becomes even more startling, since an adult in the Reserves must have been extraordinarily fit to have survived to the age of 18, when he could apply for work on the mines. Dr. Zwarenstein, of the University of Cape Town, states that in the Transkei women and children are sometimes rationed so as to provide extra food for the young man of the family, who must qualify for the mines.

Suffering from diseases due to poverty, the Natives of the Reserves have inadequate medical and hospital provision; in many cases they are still too superstitious to use what facilities there are. Excluding the Reserves there is in the Union one doctor for every 2,000 head of population; in the Reserves the figures are about 1 to 30,000. For the whole of the Union there are about 14,000 hospital beds available for the non-European population; but the mines and factories account for almost half that number, so that the beds available for the natives of the Reserves are probably not more than in the ratio of 1 bed for every 5,000 people. The Government has recently instituted the training of Native Medical Aids (partly qualified doctors) to work in the Reserves, and this will relieve the situation slightly.

In the absence of more accurate statistics various estimates have been made by officials and others of the family incomes of the Natives in the Reserves. From these it would appear that, after the maize requirements have been satisfied, the average family of five has about £3 per year to spend on taxes (£1 10s.), on clothes, and on extra food. The total annual income of the family is probably about £20, or about 2½d. per day per head of population. From this income all requirements must be met, and it is therefore hardly surprising that a large proportion of the population is permanently in debt, or that as many as 60% of the adult male population from any one area may be absent at work in European areas; on the day that the 1936 census was taken 20% of the total male population, of all ages, was absent from the Reserves of the Union.

Agricultural labour in the Reserves is performed chiefly by women and children, since so many men are away at work in European areas. This has serious effects on the social fabric of tribal and family life, as well as on the productive power of the Reserves. Children lack the traditional tribal discipline, and many Natives complain bitterly that they have lost all authority over their families. This aspect of the matter does not strike Europeans, and yet, when the Government offered work on the National Roads to unemployed European married men, there was great public

sympathy with their complaint against being offered work away from their homes; their family life would be destroyed.

The education system of the Reserves is hopelessly inadequate to supply the need created by the deterioration of tribalism; probably not more than 12% of children of a school-going age are at school or would find accommodation if they wished to go. The standard of education reached by the small minority that does attend school is poor, and most of the pupils are in the lowest standard. Initiation schools, or so-called "Kaffir schools", where pubertal rites are carried out, often with considerable physical and mental cruelty, are regular features of life in the Reserves, and even Natives who have embraced Christianity find tribal opinion too strong for them, and allow their children to be initiated. The large mass of the population is, accordingly, illiterate, and constitutes a dead weight on the whole population of the Union. Ignorance and superstition prevail, and poverty, malnutrition, and disease effectively slow up the rate of social progress.

#### 4. WESTERN CIVILISATION AND MAGIC

Although Mission Societies have, for more than a century, been in contact with the Bantu and have made considerable impression on Native life and customs, magic, witchcraft, and superstition generally still flourish; this is particularly true of the Reserves where tribal traditions are strong and contact with European civilisation is less continuous. The magician or witch-doctor is called in to heal the sick, to prevent evil, and to "smell out" the evil-doer; he throws a specially prepared set of bones, and from the way they lie illuminates the past and foretells the future. Sometimes the result of his divination leads to assault, and very occasionally to murder, either by an individual or by a whole tribe. The witch-doctor has great power and influence, and, as a staunch supporter of tribal customs and of the authority of the chief, is a conservative and reactionary force. The "doctoring" of fields and crops is fairly general in the Reserves, and tribal custom, linked with superstition, demands that no ploughing or reaping shall take place until the chief's fields have been ploughed or reaped. Agricultural demonstrators in the Reserves find great difficulty in persuading Natives to procure good seed, and this is usually put down to a superstitious fear of innovation. (It should be added that there is evidence to show that many Natives refuse to use good seed because they fear that good crops will attract European attention to their land; a similar reason prompts the Basutos to refuse to allow prospecting for minerals in their country.) The superstitious fertility rights hamper progressive agriculture and reduce it to a dead level of uniformity that had its social and economic uses under the subsistence economy of tribalism; with the impact of a money economy, however, it merely serves to increase poverty and to create degrees of wealth within the Reserves.

While on the subject of witchcraft and magic, it is worth while noting that they persist not only in the Reserves and not only among Natives. In urban areas witch-doctors, with a very creditable adaptability, do a good trade among Natives, and sell them medicine against arrest by the police, to insure them against unemployment, and to further their love affairs. Among Europeans, too, Native witch-doctors have a certain vogue. Partly due to contact with the Bantu, and partly to the superstitious ignorance not uncommon in remote rural areas the world over, the more backward Europeans of the poor white class are apt to believe in magic rather than in science. Native medical doctors frequently have considerable European practices, and some of the doctors admit frankly that their reputation among Europeans does not rest entirely on medical skill; the European thinks that the Bantu doctor is bound to have some magical skill left, even though he was trained in the medical schools of Europe or America. In October 1938 a Native in Johannesburg was sentenced to pay a fine of £25 or to go to prison for three months for obtaining money under false pretences from a European who had been suffering from stomach trouble and had invited the Native witch-doctor to his house to "throw the bones". The witch-doctor found that there was "something in the nature of a bat" in his patient's stomach, gave him herbs and powders, and made a number of incisions with a razor blade. In expressing surprise "that a European should believe such nonsense", the judge was perhaps making the common assumption that Europeans are naturally superior to Natives, and therefore less prone to believe nonsense. Another recent case throws an interesting light both on the belief in magic and on colour prejudice. At Naauwpoort a European saw an apparition in the shape of a woman, who told him where money was buried, and he called in a noted Basuto witch-doctor. The apparition is reported to have said, *in English*, to the witch-doctor: "You are not wanted here", and to have struck him to the ground, after which he, not unjustifiably, refused to go near the place, and the owner took other steps to uncover his hidden treasure. (It would appear that South African ghosts make a distinction between black and white, and prefer to address the former in English.) Other cases, more serious in their evil effects, are reported from time to time, and even the late General de Wet was said to have had dealings with a Malay witch-doctor. From time to time, too, a "healer" appears among Europeans, and many patients flock to him, in spite of the warnings of the churches; and the prophetic utterances of a famous South African "*siener*", van Rensburg, who flourished at the time of the Rebellion in 1914, are still quoted seriously by correspondents in the Nationalist Afrikaans Press.

It is well to distinguish, among Natives, between witch-doctors and herbalists. The herbalist is a man with a profound knowledge, sometimes mixed with superstition, of the medicinal value of wild herbs, and he often effects genuine and lasting cures. In Natal the profession of

Native herbalist is recognised by the Government, and it is probable that, in the absence of adequate medical and hospital facilities, the herbalists do a great deal of good.

Just in case any reader has by now come to the conclusion that South Africans, Native and Europeans, are a particularly superstitious people, it should be pointed out that the enormous quantity of quack medicines, backed by expert advertising and a semi-scientific jargon, that is sold to the British public annually is proof, if we require it, that European civilisation has not quite emerged from darkness yet.

Contact with western civilisation has undoubtedly done much to destroy the power of superstition, both in the Reserves and elsewhere. Scientific medicine, education, and religion have all eaten away at the solid rock of magic; but it is remarkable how little the Bantu mind has really been influenced by European ideas. The Native has taken over many of the superficial and often less pleasing attributes of European civilisation, such as flashy clothes and trumpery luxury articles; he has had, perforce, to adapt himself to European habits and manners in order to obtain employment. But the really valuable aspects of civilisation have too often passed over him, because his ignorance has not been lightened by a system of wide-spread education which he is too poor to obtain for himself. The result of this is often that the Natives who have been to the mines return to the Reserves having shed the natural dignity and good manners of the tribe without having gained anything worth while in their place. The older Natives now distinguish between "dressed" and "blanket" Natives, and, in this way, yet another class distinction is being fostered in the Reserves. Such are the devastating effects of a system of production that deals in terms of labour rather than of men and women.

## 5. ADMINISTRATION

Administration of Natives is a subject that occupies a great deal of attention throughout Africa, and much thought is expended on the best method of ruling tribal, as distinct from urban, areas. That a good deal of administrative effort is stultified by the economic necessities of capitalism must not blind us to the importance of the question. Whether they are poor or wealthy it actually does make a great deal of difference to the Natives in the Reserves whether they have an efficient system of government. There seems to be little doubt that the Native inhabitants of Tanganyika or Nigeria, under a reasonably efficient system of Indirect Rule, are considerably better off than those in Kenya.

In South Africa the administration of Native affairs throughout the country is vested in the Governor-General-in-Council, and the Governor-General is legally the Supreme Chief of all Natives outside of the Cape Province; as such, the powers assumed to have been exercised by hereditary chiefs under Bantu tribal conditions are vested in him.

In practice, of course, the executive authority rests with the Minister of Native Affairs and with his department, while the Union Parliament is the supreme legislative authority to whom the Minister is responsible. As we shall see later, Natives living outside the Reserves are only partly controlled by the Department of Native Affairs; but inside the Reserves its administrative authority is supreme and the legal powers vested in it are remarkably wide. By the Native Administration Act of 1927 (and subsequent amendments) the Governor-General is empowered to legislate by proclamation for all Reserves on a variety of subjects such as pass regulations, tribal boundaries, appointment of chiefs, alteration to existing laws, the prohibition, without previous permission of a magistrate, of public meeting, irrigation, limitation of stock; he may remove tribes or portions of tribes from one area to another, and he may apply the principles of collective responsibility for stock theft or for damage to public property. The final check on all powers of proclamation is the provision that proclamations are subject to repeal or revision by Parliament, a power that is practically never exercised.

The functions of the Department of Native Affairs are correspondingly wide. It is responsible for the maintenance of law and order, the collection of taxes, the promotion of education, agriculture, irrigation, administration of finance, and the general welfare of the inhabitants of the Reserves. It will be seen at once that, as regards the three million people in the Reserves, the Department exercises legislative, administrative and judicial functions that would, in an ordinary state, be separate; further, the administrative functions would normally be divided among eight or ten different departments. The Department of Native Affairs is, in effect, a government by itself, and its position is analogous to that of a Colonial government under the British Parliament. On paper this system of administration, and of legislation by proclamation, looks considerably more dangerous than it is in practice; in a country such as South Africa, where parliament represents the European population, the removal from the sphere of parliamentary discussion of the details of Native administration has decided advantages in that it enables the officials of the Department to mitigate some of the legislative evils by administrative action.

Assisting the Minister of Native Affairs in the matter of policy is the Native Affairs Commission which consists, at present, of three Members of Parliament and a retired magistrate. The functions of the Commission are to travel through the country, to inform themselves on all matters pertaining to Native welfare, and to advise the Minister accordingly; if their advice is not taken the Commissioners may place their views before Parliament. In its early days, from 1920 when it was established, the Commission performed useful work and was responsible for a considerable quickening of interest in Native affairs as well as for some useful legislation. Latterly, however, appointments have become

largely political and the Commission is apt to echo its master's voice—in the present case, the United Party. Recent reports of the Commission have been characterised by some wild statements and by violent attacks on those who dared suggest that all was not for the best under the best of possible governments. For this reason it is as well to make it quite clear that the Commissioners are politicians and not officials of the Native Affairs Department.

Since the legislative control of Native administration rests with Parliament it is important to know to what extent Native opinion is represented in the legislature of the Union. This whole matter will be dealt with in greater detail at a later stage and it is sufficient here to state that, by an act of 1936, Natives are represented in Parliament by four Senators, indirectly elected, and by three Members of the Assembly elected by the Bantu of the Cape Province. In other words, the Native population of 6½ million is represented by seven members and the European population of 2 million by 190 members. The Act of Union did make provision for the appointment by the Government of four Senators to represent Native opinion; but the appointments soon became political and need hardly be taken seriously, especially when it is recalled that Mr. Pirow once achieved Senatorship as a representative of Native opinion, and that, more recently (1939), two liberal Ministers resigned from General Hertzog's cabinet because he insisted on using this back door in order to foist Mr. Fourie on to a reluctant legislature. As a legislative control on administration, therefore, Native opinion has little power.

## 6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE RESERVES

Local government in the Reserves is, broadly, of two kinds. Over one million Bantu in the Reserves of the Cape Province are locally governed by what is known as the Transkei System, in some ways South Africa's most individual contribution to the science of local government for African tribes. The pre-Union Cape Colony had evolved a policy with regard to its tribal Natives that aimed at the destruction of the powers of the chiefs and the substitution of magistrates and local councils; the policy included the granting of individual land titles, but this was never carried very far, and at the present time the bulk of the land is communally held. In the Glen Grey district, where the policy was first adopted in 1894, Location Boards, consisting of three Natives elected for one year by the landholders, control local matters such as common grazing ground and watercourses; a District Council, consisting of six members nominated for three years by the Location Boards and six nominated by the Governor-General, with the magistrate as chairman, has wider duties such as the making and repairing of roads, afforestation, and public health. It deals with an annual revenue of about £10,000 derived from local taxation.



In most other parts of the Transkei a similar system has been evolved, except that there are no Location Boards; there are twenty-six District Councils composed of four elected and two nominated Councillors, with the magistrate as chairman. In all cases of election the final nomination rests with the Governor-General, and all the official members are nominated by him—in practice, of course, by the district magistrate—except in the case of Pondoland, where the chiefs still have power and the nominations are in their hands. The District Councils are the basis of the United Transkeian Territories General Council, which consists of the Chief Magistrate as chairman, the twenty-six district magistrates as *ex officio* members, and three Native representatives from each District Council, two elected and one nominated; the chiefs of Tembuland and of Western and Eastern Pondoland are also *ex officio* members.

The General Council is called the Bunga, and meets in its well-appointed Council Chamber at Umtata to discuss and resolve upon all matters affecting the Transkeian Territories and Native welfare in general. Education, roads, agriculture, irrigation, Bantu customary law, limitation of stock, are all dealt with by this Council, and the dignity of its proceedings and the high standard of debate and of information have surprised many visitors accustomed, no doubt, to the party squabbling that passes for debate in many European assemblies. The Council deals with an annual revenue of about £170,000, derived from quitrents and from a local hut tax of 10s. per year. From this revenue it has to maintain about 4,000 miles of roads, construct and maintain over 1,000 dipping tanks, pay the salaries of agricultural demonstrators, maintain seven agricultural schools, grant more than fifty scholarships to promising Native pupils, and help to pay for medical services. It is, of course, impossible to do this, and we may well imagine that the roads are not first class nor the medical facilities adequate; that, however, is not the fault of the Bunga, but of a pitifully inadequate revenue. The Bunga is expected to run all these services for over a million people on a revenue a little more than half the amount spent by the Union Government on the one item "Printing and Stationery", or—perhaps a more apt comparison—on about a quarter of the amount spent annually on prisons and reformatories. There is, of course, this difference—that the inmates of the prisons and reformatories do not have to pay for their own services. That the General Council spends its limited resources as wisely as it does is a tribute to the Bantu and to the guidance of the official magistrates; that the resources are limited is an attribute of an economic system that creates poverty.

Resolutions of the Bunga, when they affect Native welfare generally, are transmitted to the Government, which is thus enabled to keep in touch with a considerable body of Native opinion. When the resolutions affect the territories under the Council they are acted upon by an Executive Committee consisting of the Chief Magistrate, three other

magistrates appointed by him, and four Natives elected by the Council. Public works decided upon by the Council are executed by the District Councils, which have no funds of their own, but depend on funds allocated by the Bunga, a system that tends to irresponsibility on the part of the District Councils.

The General Council has recently acquired another function—namely, the election of one of the four Senators to represent the Bantu, and of three members of the Natives' Representative Council.

The Union Government is responsible for the appointment and payment of its officials in the Transkeian Territories and for the collection of taxes and the maintenance of law and order. In proportion to income, taxes are high, and of the money left over after subsistence is provided for, possibly 50% goes in the two taxes, 10s. local tax and £1 to the Union Government. Many Natives in the Reserves pay more taxation, absolutely, not relatively, than do many European farmers.

The Transkei System is a notable experiment in political science, in the training of Africans to the task of local self-government under the conditions of modern civilisation. It is still so much officially controlled by nomination and by the presence in the Council of European magistrates that it is doubtful whether the Native members really express Native opinion; and the overcrowding and poverty of the Reserves set the system a task far beyond its capacity. The principle that the poor must pay for their own services, whether adopted in England or in South Africa, means that the poor must do without those services. But, apart from these serious though not inherent limitations, and considered purely as a system of local government for Africans, the Transkei System is good. South African Reserves differ from Native areas in Tanganyika, for example, in that they are not really Reserves so much as labour depots in constant communication with European labour centres; and the principles of Indirect Rule that aim at local government based on tribal traditions are not applicable to conditions in the Transkei. Granted those conditions, the present system works as well as might be expected; and, with the demands of European employers, those conditions are not going to alter rapidly.

Most of the Reserves outside the Cape Province are administered directly by the Department of Native Affairs through the usual Native Commissioners, whose functions are, as in other parts of Africa, administrative and judicial. These functions need no detailed description, and it is sufficient to say that they are as wide as the functions of the Native Affairs Department itself: the Commissioner is responsible for maintaining law and order, collecting taxes, settling disputes between tribes or individuals, keeping the Government in touch with opinions and with any unusual movements in the Reserves. In fact, the officials of the Department are responsible for the government of the tribes. In a few areas local councils, on the Transkei model, have been set up;

and in the two Free State Reserves Boards of Management are established consisting of two Europeans, as chairman and vice-chairman, and from five to seven Natives, all appointed by the Department.

Government recognises, and pays small salaries to, about 1,700 chiefs in the Reserves, and, in return, the chiefs assist the officials in maintaining order and in tax collection. It is a very common error among Europeans to credit the tribal Bantu chief, in pre-European days, with sovereign powers, a kind of dictator with powers of life and death. The traditional Bantu political constitution was, as we should expect where property was largely communal and economic life was on a subsistence basis, democratic; the typical system was a chief and a tribal council, and in times of crisis the voice of the tribe was supreme. The chief could not alienate land nor condemn people on his own authority; he was, in reality, the voice of the tribe, and his position was surrounded by tribal lore. The succession was usually hereditary, but was also subject to the approval of the tribe. In very exceptional cases dictatorships arose and, usually, these were the result of a threat of danger from outside; a comparison with Mr. Lloyd George's Inner Cabinet during the Great War will serve to show that, in times of danger, extraordinary power tends to concentrate in the hands of a small executive. The danger from outside among the Bantu was often the threat of conquest by the Europeans, and, since this conquest did eventually take place, the European governments found among the Bantu a system of government under which the chiefs had exceptional powers; this system they assumed to be normal. The history of the conquest of Africa is strewn with so-called "treaties". These were agreements between the European Government concerned and the chiefs of tribes, and they resulted in the Europeans becoming the owners of the land. In most cases the chiefs did not really know what they were agreeing to, and probably thought that they were granting land in use, not in ownership; but in any case they had no tribal authority to sign the agreements which were, from any legal point of view, valueless. At one stage in the early 19th century the British Foreign Office supplied explorers and others with blank treaty forms for use with African chiefs.

The assumption that Bantu government was despotic suited the policy of the European conquerors admirably. Faced with the task of administering vast areas, the cheapest and most convenient way was to use the chiefs as petty officials at a rate of pay which no European official would accept. In this way European Governments have consistently enhanced the power of the chiefs at the expense of tribal institutions. Where the hereditary chief could not be found, or was, from the European point of view, "unsuitable" (which meant that he was not prepared to serve a foreign government), substitutes were appointed—usurpers who were pleased to obtain the favour of the Government and to play the petty tyrant at the expense of flouting tribal tradition.

As recently as 1938 the African National Congress passed a resolution "emphatically protesting against the Government's policy of nominating persons to chieftainship other than recognised members of the Royal Family in accordance with Native law and tradition". The position is felt more keenly now that chiefs vote on behalf of their subjects in the election of four Senators and of the members of the Natives' Representative Council; thus a Government-nominated chief who may have no real hereditary authority may be in the position of casting 10,000 votes on behalf of his tribe.

The powers entrusted to the chiefs consist largely of the unpleasant tasks of maintaining law and order and collecting taxes. A certain amount of minor judicial work is placed on them, and a proportion of the fines paid goes to them as part of their salaries; this only serves to make them less popular, and exposes underpaid men to the temptation of corruption. The recognition of chiefs by the Union Government is thus a matter of convenience and economy based on an original misconception of the functions of the chief; on the one hand their powers are limited by European administrative officials and, on the other, they are uncontrolled by traditional tribal councils. They are responsible to the Government and not, as in the past, to the tribe. In practice they are badly underpaid servants of the administration. Any pretence that in recognising chiefs the Government is following a policy of working through customary Bantu institutions is laughable, and we have only to compare the real use made of tribal customs under Indirect Rule in Tanganyika and Nigeria to realise this. There the institutions of tribal treasuries, of tribal councils, and of the responsibility of the chief to his council, constitute a serious attempt to conduct local government through African institutions. In the Union "working through tribal customs" is a cloak for saving administrative expenses. For the services of 1,700 chiefs and a great many more headmen the Government spends £40,000 a year.

Though a majority of tribal Natives have a great respect for their hereditary chiefs and would welcome a restoration of real chieftainship, it is doubtful whether the system can be revived in a country where there is such a constant flow from the Reserve to labour areas in the Union. The mass of chiefs to-day are ignorant, greedy, and conservative, and the ancient remedies of a tribe against an exploiting chief are no longer available; the institutions of tribalism have been too much affected by contact with Western civilisation to be usefully revived, and an extension of the Transkei System of local government offers the best hope of progress. An example of the kind of chief that is popular with the Government may serve to show to what a state of decay the institution of chieftainship has fallen. It was reported in the Press in October 1938 that Prince Bhekinkosi Zulu, a grandson of the brother of the notorious Dingaan, was touring the Native Locations in urban areas with the

approval of the Department of Native Affairs. He travelled by motor and had his private brass band. In one address he appealed for more energy, cleanliness, and eagerness for self-improvement. Young men had deteriorated, were "weeds". Now, said he, certain Natives were inclined to blame the Europeans for this. But it was the Natives themselves who were to blame, since "the Europeans set no limit upon Native education, wealth, or other form of advancement, and any Native depending solely upon his own worth could better himself to such an extent that he would be respected by the Europeans". (One is not surprised that he had departmental approval.) Natives, he continued, should not work against Europeans, because "they gave us Christianity and the rule of Jesus instead of murder and bloodshed." The main causes of "the low level at which most Natives were compelled to live to-day" were "lack of cleanliness, immorality, and proper conceptions of what Christianity meant, the indiscriminate use of the knife, especially after beer drinks, and the imitation of European customs". No wonder the Press refers to him as "Prince" Bhekinkosi Zulu. It is doubtful whether the same courtesy would have been extended to him had he told the truth and dared to add insufficient wages and exploitation to the list of reasons for the low level at which the Bantu are "compelled" to live.

One of the most important changes brought about by the Native Administration Act of 1927 was the legal recognition accorded to Native law and custom in the Reserves. With few exceptions the recognition extends to civil and not to criminal law, and the condition laid down is that the principles of Native customary law shall not be repugnant to the principles of public policy or natural justice. Native Commissioners and chiefs, therefore, apply customary law in civil cases in the Reserves, and perhaps the most important aspect of that law is that of *lobolo* or *bogadi*, the marriage dowry system which has previously been explained. In most cases the knowledge by Europeans of true Native custom is vague, and Native Commissioners have to make use of Bantu assessors to discover the real meaning of a custom; in Natal the Native laws were codified towards the end of the 19th century, and the Natal Native Code has since been extended to other areas. Special courts of appeal have been set up to try civil cases arising from Bantu law, and in Natal a special Native High Court tries appeals in criminal cases. Bantu customary law has, of course, been greatly modified by Acts of Parliament and by mere contact with a money economy; it has also been altered by proclamations of the Supreme Chief, the Governor General, in itself a violation of Bantu custom. Finally, it should be noted that, outside the Reserves, Africans are mostly affected by European laws and courts; also, whether in or out of the Reserves, they are subject to the laws made by the Union Parliament, and the ordinary courts of the land are open to them except in certain important cases which will be dealt with later.

## 7. TRUST FUNDS AND LAND

It was mentioned in an earlier chapter that in laying down the principle of territorial segregation in 1913 the Botha Government had promised that additional land should be set aside for Native occupation. It took twenty-three years before that promise began to be fulfilled by the Native Land and Trust Act of 1936. This Act makes provision for purchase, by the Native Trust Fund or by individual Natives, of a maximum of about 16½ million acres of land, practically all of which will border on the existing Reserves. When all this land has been bought, approximately 13% of the area of the Union will have been reserved for Native occupation. Since the passage of the Act Parliament has granted about £1,000,000 to the Trust Fund for land-purchase in the delimited areas. In most cases this land has been acquired from existing European owners, and, as might have been expected with such a large buyer as the Government in the market, land values jumped considerably. In some cases three times the normal value of land was paid by the Trust to European owners, many of whom protested, and still protest, vigorously against a Government that actually uses taxpayers' money to buy land for Natives. There also seems to have been a certain amount of jobbery, and, though this is difficult to prove, it is a fact that there are cases where the Department of Native Affairs paid for a farm four times what it was valued at two years previously by another Government Department.

The Act of 1936 also sets up a Native Trust Fund. The principle of Trust Funds is an old one, and the first of its kind was that established in Natal in 1860, when tribally owned land was invested in a Trust empowered to maintain a Fund. The object was mainly to give greater legal security to the tribe, and a secondary object was to avoid unnecessary public expenditure on tribal lands. This secondary object, which was not stressed at the time, has by degrees become the principal object. Other Trust Funds were subsequently established, and in 1925 Parliament gave authority to any tribe to raise a local levy on all taxpayers in any particular Reserve. The *Official Year Book* of the Union, in describing the value to the tribes of these self-imposed levies, says that they are "utilised as media not only for discharging tribal obligations, but for providing services of benefit and utility to the communities concerned, e.g., fencing, tree planting, the construction and maintenance of dipping tanks, the sinking of boreholes, erection of windmills, etc." In plain language, the tribes must depend on their own meagre resources and efforts to provide services of benefit to the community. This admirable doctrine of self-help is, naturally, not extended to the European agricultural community, for whom cheap government loans are available.

The two biggest pre-1936 Funds were those of Natal and Zululand, and these have now been merged in the South African Native Trust Fund. Of this Trust the Governor-General, who may delegate his power

to the Minister of Native Affairs, is Trustee, and the Fund obtains revenue from the sale or renting of land, from fees and fines, and from Government grants. From this revenue the Trust is expected to pay for "the acquisition and development of land for Native settlement, for the advancement of the agricultural, pastoral and industrial interests of the Natives and, generally, to promote the objects and purposes of the Trust". These objects and purposes are defined as "the settlement, support, benefit, and material and moral welfare of the Natives of the Union". These quotations are taken from official sources, and in the art of concealing poverty it is difficult to improve upon official language.

The sum frequently mentioned officially as the limit of what Parliament will grant to the Trust Fund over a period of years is £10,000,000, and with the present method of buying land more than that amount will be required for land purchase alone, not to mention "material and moral welfare". A conservative estimate shows that something like £50,000,000 spent immediately might save the Reserves from decay; failing that, the new land acquired by the Trust will go the way of the old, and become progressively less fertile. After that, more land will be needed, but will, presumably, not be available, and economic necessity in the Reserves will continue to force the Natives to supply European labour demands; unless, of course, the Europeans are going systematically to sell back to the Africans the land of which the latter were previously robbed—sell it back at a thousand times its original value.

The "material and moral welfare of the Natives of the Union" ought, of course, to be a charge on general revenue, and not, as the Act makes it, a charge of a special Fund that will be largely dependent on what can be raised from a poverty-stricken peasantry. It will, however, become still more clear as we proceed that the Native Land and Trust Act is, in practice, a method of evading responsibility and of making the African pay for everything he receives.

## 8. CONCLUSION

We may conveniently sum up the situation in the Reserves as follows: they are far too small for their population; the inhabitants form an ignorant, superstitious, poverty-stricken, and conservative peasantry, living below the bread line, and compelled to sell their labour in the European industrial market. The taxation they suffer is far beyond their capacity to pay; they are, in the main, expected to support their own services, and these are, consequently, inadequate. Their tribal institutions have been seriously impaired by European administration, and their habits and customs have suffered by the contact with European economy. The Christian Missions and many of the administrative officials are doing their best against overwhelming odds, but the real progress of European civilisation has been pitifully slow. The root cause of all this is the fact

that the inhabitants of the Reserves are being dragged at the wheel of European-controlled industry and agriculture. As long as capitalist exploitation of labour remains, the Reserves will continue to be what they are now, the rural slums of the Union.

#### CHAPTER IV

### EUROPEAN RURAL AREAS

#### 1. EUROPEAN FARMS

EUROPEAN FARMS in South Africa occupy about 98,000,000 morgen<sup>1</sup> of land, and are bonded or mortgaged to the extent of about £100,000,000, of which 30% is owed to the Government Land Bank, and the balance to the commercial banks. On an average, therefore, the European farmer owes on every morgen of land 6s. to the Government and 14s. to the banks, the bulk of whose capital is held by British shareholders, who thus rank as absentee landlords. While, therefore, it is convenient to speak about the Europeans in the Union as the landowning class, the extent of their indebtedness is a measure of their economic dependence; since their debt is increasing, their independence is diminishing.

About 304,000 square miles, or 60% of the area of the Union, are occupied by European farmers; about 70% of the farms are owned by the occupiers, the remaining 30% being rented land or farmed by managers for absentee owners. It is impossible to speak about an "average farm", since the size, the condition of farming, the profitability, and the condition of labour all vary with climate and marketing conditions; in South Africa these variations are much larger than in Europe, stretching from the intensive farming on a few morgen in parts of the Western Province to the cattle ranching on thousands of morgen in British Bechuanaland. Some idea of the sizes of farms may be gained from the following diagram, from which it will be noticed that the largest group occurs between 101 and 500 morgen, and the second largest between 501 and 1000; almost 80% of the farms are not larger than 1,000 morgen.

The total European population on the 104,000 farms is 696,000 and the non-European population is about 2,750,000. In other words, about 25% of the population in European rural areas consists of the European landowning class, and 75% of the non-European labouring class that has no prospect of attaining ownership in these areas.

While the European farming population has increased from 525,000 in 1904 to 696,000 in 1936, it has declined relative to the European urban population by 11%; during the same period the non-European

<sup>1</sup> The morgen is a South African measure of area and is equal to 1½ acres.  
c (Black Man's Burden)



population in European rural areas has increased at a greater rate than the European. What is happening, in effect, is that farms are becoming smaller by sub-division and that more labour is required on the increased number of farms. Also, industrialisation is increasing the urban population at the expense of the rural.

TABLE IX.  
*Numbers and Sizes of Farms in European Areas (1936).*

<i>Size of farm in Morgen</i>	<i>5,000</i>	<i>10,000</i>	<i>15,000</i>	<i>20,000</i>	<i>25,000</i>	<i>30,000</i>	<i>35,000</i>	<i>No. of farms.</i>
<i>less than 5</i>								<i>4,188</i>
<i>5-20</i>								<i>9,571</i>
<i>21-100</i>								<i>10,102</i>
<i>101-500</i>								<i>33,601</i>
<i>501-1000</i>								<i>20,248</i>
<i>1001-2000</i>								<i>13,103</i>
<i>2001-3000</i>								<i>4,608</i>
<i>3001-5000</i>								<i>3,567</i>
<i>5001-10,000</i>								<i>2,142</i>
<i>Over 10,000</i>								<i>812</i>
<i>Undivided</i>								<i>2,307</i>
<i>Total</i>								<i>104,249</i>

## 2. THE EUROPEAN FARMER

The large majority, about 84%, of European farmers are Afrikaans speaking. They are the descendants of the Voortrekkers, and retain many of the characteristics of those sturdy pioneers, characteristic modified by contact with the Bantu and the British, and with the material progress of Western civilisation. They are generously hospitable

to strangers, strongly individualistic in outlook, leisurely in their habits; their religion is of the Old rather than of the New Testament, and the vagaries of the climate have made them fatalistic. The Afrikaner is Calvinistic in religious outlook, and the vast majority of Boer farmers belong to one or other of the Afrikaans churches. The influence of the *Predikante* or ministers that Milner so heartily disliked when it operated to stiffen Boer resistance has considerably declined, owing, in part, to their participation in party politics; still, it is significant that Dr. Malan and Dr. van der Merwe, leaders of the Nationalist Party whose strength is in the rural areas, both deserted the pulpit for Parliament. Thirty years ago family prayers, at which the Native servants were often present, were a regular feature of farm-life, but to-day the custom has almost completely died out.

The Afrikaans farmer has a kindly and leisurely sense of humour that sucks the last ounce out of a situation; he is slow to anger; he has a rugged common-sense born of generations of struggle against the forces of Nature; he does not easily part with hard cash, and is convinced that townsmen are "clever" and bent on defrauding him. Usually he has natural good manners and a sense of the fitness of things; but contact with the more hurried modern life is adversely affecting the courteous and dignified air of the real old Afrikaner.

The Boer is by tradition, upbringing, and religion a democrat within the social class of colour; equality with non-Europeans he will neither admit nor tolerate, but apart from that he is seldom a respecter of persons, and it is only within recent years that intensive anti-Jewish and anti-British propaganda has begun to corrupt his naturally democratic views. The South African farmer works much harder than the English gentleman farmer, and it is a mistake to regard him as a planter or plantation owner. His labourers are much less skilled than English agricultural labourers, and require more supervision and personal instruction. Granted his fundamental belief that the Bantu labourer is his natural and divinely-ordained inferior whose requirements are low, the Boer farmer treats his workers in a kindly and tolerant fashion; he does not refer to them as "bloody niggers", but as *skepsels*, which may be translated as "creatures".

A long tradition of large farms and of a land-hunger easily satisfied at the expense of the African; the presence of a relatively abundant supply of cheap labour; a contempt for all experts, and a sceptical attitude towards novelties have combined to induce bad economic habits in the Afrikaans farmer and are responsible for retarding the scientific development of agriculture.

### 3. AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Though there are a few exceptions to the rule, the average farmer in South Africa is conservative and unprogressive; he lacks the mental

and material equipment to compete successfully in the world market. Long control of the political machinery of the country has enabled the farmers to get what was going from the national money-bags, and thus to escape the worst consequences of antiquated methods; one result is that they have become dangerously dependent on Government aid. South Africa suffers from the common complaint of all agricultural countries that produce capitalistically for a world market; but, in addition, the internal market is so poor and so badly organised that farming shows a very low rate of profit. The farmers do not co-operate easily, and the various attempts at co-operation to secure better marketing conditions have almost all failed.

It must not be thought that the consumer in South Africa benefits by the low prices obtaining for agricultural produce. The spread between prices obtained by the producer and those paid by the consumer is greater than in any British Commonwealth country. In 1930 the producer received 17s. a bag (200 lbs.) for wheat and the consumer paid 63s. a bag for meal; at the moment (1939) the corresponding figures are probably 21s. and 35s. The same state of affairs is revealed in the maize and meat markets, and is due, in part, to the common phenomenon of excessive middleman profits. The so-called "meat-ring" in Johannesburg, for example, is financially powerful enough to control the meat market to the detriment of producer and consumer alike.

The economic difficulties in which the South African farmer finds himself as the result of low world prices are aggravated, then, by three factors. Climatic conditions and out-of-date methods keep costs of production relatively high: the producer is exploited by the merchant; and, lastly, the unequal division of the national income effectively prevents the creation of a sound internal market—in other words, 70% of the population is too poor to buy agricultural products.

Government has attempted to meet these difficulties by going round them; it has bolstered up the farmer, but carefully avoided any interference with profits. It has granted preferential treatment to farmers in the matters of import duties and railway rates, it has guaranteed prices and controlled import of agricultural produce; but it has made little effort to control either the farmers or the merchants. In those crops for which there is a world market which controls the price, the export subsidy system was tried. During the six years when the various subsidy acts were in force about £12,000,000 was paid out in direct subsidies to farmers on produce exported. The Londoner was then able to buy South African butter at 5d. a lb., while the local consumer was paying 1s. 3d., and while the vast majority of South African consumers were unable to afford butter at all. The subsidy was paid at a flat rate, irrespective of quality or quantity, so that wealthy farmers received subsidy cheques (and bought "subsidy" cars) of £3,000. This system of paying to the farmer direct the difference between the world price and what is

considered to be a "fair" price in South Africa was a trifle too obvious to last. It has now been partially abandoned, but the principle of State aid to agriculture is still in full swing under the guise of Marketing Acts, Wheat Control Boards, Dairy Control Boards, and the like; farmers are still guaranteed prices well above the world prices, but the difference is now paid directly by the consumer in the shape of a levy. It is the same thing, and South Africans still pay more for their own products than the overseas buyers do, while the majority of the inhabitants of the Union are still unable to buy butter, milk, meat, or maize.

One of the effects of this system of State aid has been the production of crops on uneconomic soil; areas have been brought under cultivation for maize and wheat solely because the guaranteed price makes it profitable to do so, and the net result is to encourage unscientific agriculture. Nor does the matter end there, for, as each new area comes under uneconomic cultivation, it constitutes a farming area which must in no circumstances be allowed to fail. Government aid must, therefore, be called in to "save" that new piece of uneconomic farming whose existence was solely due, in the first instance, to Government aid. An economist from the University of Cape Town, Professor Richards, says: "Most of our marketing legislation is based not on authority, but on unproved and probably unprovable assertions. It is not the attitude of economists that is at fault, but the attitude of official and unofficial apologists for a policy which deliberately ignores experience both here and elsewhere, which flouts conclusions of its own economists and renders their research work farcical; which wastes resources and land and labour; which approves legislation based on no authority, and which is entirely inimical to the best interests of the country and of the farmers themselves. Powers conferred on the agricultural community by the marketing and other acts constitute a piece of sectional legislation, without adequate public safeguards, with every prospect of heavy state losses and with no real permanent benefit to the state or to the agricultural community." That is the bitter cry of the economist who sees the results of a policy that "wastes resources and land and labour".

Let us see what someone who helps to carry out that policy says. Speaking at the opening of the Rand Agricultural Show in April of 1939, the then Minister of Finance, Mr. Havenga, said: "Through inability or unwillingness to buy, there had been over-production of nearly all agricultural products. Increased and improved production, better use of machinery, and better farming methods had often proved a curse." The Minister did not mention what the millions of under-nourished inhabitants of the Union thought about over-production; nor would he know what they thought, since his interest is with the landowner, and not with the labour that produces.

Faced with the hideous curse of over-production, South African

Governments have, as we have seen, resorted to measures that would bolster up the farmers, as distinct from agriculture, and that would not interfere unduly with the middleman exploiter. The European farmer, subjected to the stresses of a world capitalist system of production, must be protected. As Mr. Havenga said at the Rand Show: "The Government could not contemplate the mass collapse of agriculture". In order to prevent that collapse, the State spent, during the five years ending in 1938, £49,000,000 by way of loans, subsidies, and services on rehabilitating European agriculture; about £20,000,000 of expenditure on agricultural loans since 1910 have been written off; the Land Bank was instituted for the express purpose of providing credit for European farmers, and, in addition to new loans granted, has already taken over £13,000,000 of debt, thus holding about £30,000,000 of agricultural debt. These figures are impressive when considered in conjunction with the European rural population. They mean that there is a debt to the Government of about £300 per farm, or of about £45 per head of European farming population. The debt to private banks is three times these amounts, and farmers are urging Government to take over more of their bonds, and thus to reduce the amount owed to the banks. From the farmers' point of view this would be a great advantage, since their vote controls the Government, but not the banks. The cry of "cheap agricultural credit" has a good sound, but in South Africa it would inevitably mean that it would be used to benefit the European farmer at the expense of everyone else. Borrowing from Government is cheaper, requires less security, and is accompanied by easier terms of repayment; besides, there is always a chance that the debt may be written off. But the Government is in a difficult position of having to satisfy both the farmer and the banker; too great an extension of the activities of the Land Bank would land the Government in a clash with the commercial banks whose headquarters are in London and Amsterdam. It has been stated that the commercial banks can borrow money from the Government Reserve Bank (equivalent to, and operating in close contact with, the Bank of England) at 3% and lend it to farmers at 5½% to 7½%; this 2½% to 4½% commission would naturally be lost to bank shareholders if Government took over bonds. Even Mr. Havenga has publicly warned farmers not to regard the Land Bank as the Government. If they wanted to borrow money to buy more land they must, he said, go to other creditors.

Government assistance to farmers has reached the stage where it is almost impossible for a farmer to become insolvent. In creating this gigantic system of State aid, governments have been faced with other difficulties besides those of avoiding a curtailment of bank profits. Common-sense dictates that, normally, financial assistance should be accompanied by financial and other control; but with a Parliament dependent on the European agricultural vote, such control would never

be agreed to. The result is that farming has in reality become a State business, but the control has been left to the individual farmer.

The situation is, thus, that agriculture is unscientific and unable to compete successfully in the world markets; the land is owned by a small percentage of the population and is bonded far beyond its market value. The Government is controlled by Big Business and by agriculture, and both are safeguarded at the expense of the consumer, European and non-European alike. The farmers receive low prices and are compensated from public revenue, while the banks and the middlemen exploit the situation by maintaining high rates of interest and high prices to the consumer; the bulk of the consumers belong to the working class and receive wages which are so low as practically to demobilise them as effective consumers of South African products. It is a crazy economy at the basis of which is the non-European worker and peasant.

#### 4. THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER

Of the 2½ million non-Europeans on European farms, about 2¼ million are Bantu, and about half of these are in the Transvaal, while the remainder are fairly equally distributed between the other three provinces. On the sugar plantations of Natal a considerable amount of Asiatic labour is employed, while in the Western Province and other parts of the Cape mostly Coloured labour is employed; but the bulk of the agricultural labour in the Union is performed by Bantu workers, and it is to their condition that attention must principally be paid.

The ratio of non-Europeans to Europeans on farms varies greatly with the size of farm and the type of farming, and the Union average of one European to three non-Europeans does not give a sufficiently accurate picture. It would be more correct to say that the ratio varies between one and ten non-Europeans to every European. There is a legal limit of five Native families to one farm, quite irrespective of the size of farm; but this limit may be exceeded by permission of the district magistrate, and, even without legal permission, many farms have more than five families.

A generation ago a considerable number of Native agricultural labourers were temporary, in the sense that they had a footing in the Reserves and that their employment on European farms was undertaken solely to earn cash for taxes or manufactured articles. To-day, however, a majority of the labourers are permanent agricultural workers, landless—since the congested state of the Reserves effectively bars them from acquiring land there, and since the law prevents them from owning land elsewhere—and solely dependent on their wages for a living. What has happened, in effect, is that, having been deprived of their land by conquest, Native agricultural labourers are now paying with their labour for access to the land they previously owned. The very considerable difference between what he costs the farmer and what the farmer makes

by his labourer's work is the rent the Native pays for the land he may not own.

Though conditions vary too much for generalisation the following will serve as a picture of a South African farm. The *werf* is the morgen or so of land where the owner's house stands, surrounded by trees; there are beautiful houses of the Colonial type, with magnificent flower-gardens and orchards, to which distinguished visitors are taken; but the vast majority of farm houses are poor in comparison with urban houses belonging to people of the same economic and social class. From the *stoep* or veranda the farmer may see his fields, his storage dam, his cattle and sheep, and his wagon-house, now more often used as a garage. He may also see, about half a mile away, the Native huts where his labourers live in badly-ventilated mud houses furnished with odds and ends of tawdry ornament, but lacking the essential equipment for health and comfort. Overcrowding and lack of privacy are worse than in some urban areas, and the average space per Native is probably not more than 10 sq. ft.

The "huts" are really the equivalent of the English agricultural village, with the farmer's house as the manor house; but the scale is entirely different. Few South African farm houses have anything approaching the comfort of an English manor; and the South African agricultural village, the "huts", completely lacks the social amenities of its English counterpart. There is no village pub, no common meeting place, and only very occasionally is there a church or a school; there is, indeed, plenty of common ground for the children's play, but poverty prevents them from acquiring any of the usual equipment for games. The English village is seldom far from a market town, but in South Africa distances are great and the farm may be as much as forty miles away from the nearest town.

The social life of the Native agricultural labourers is conditioned by their isolation, their ignorance, and their extreme poverty. Though they are cut off from their traditional tribal life, and though they may belong to a branch of the Christian Church, many Natives on farms still maintain heathen customs and a belief in magic. Initiation rites are carried out where possible, and farmers, who dislike the rites on economic and on social grounds, either refuse to allow them, or else charge a fee for an initiation school. Native marriage and inheritance customs are still adhered to.

On the whole, social life on the farms is not unlike that in the Reserves, except that in the Reserves the Bantu has a real proprietorship in the land, while on the farms he is a landless wage-earner. Celebrations of marriages, births, and deaths, and a weekly beer-drink with the labourers from a neighbouring farm, are the staple social diet; an infrequent visit to the nearest town provides the spice of variety.

The vast majority of Natives on European farms are illiterate, and

probably not more than 6% of children of a school-going age are at school. Children of eight years and upwards are often employed as herds or on other light labour, such as plough leaders, so that too much education would interfere with the supply of labour. Not all farmers are opposed to education for Natives, but those that are have strong economic class-interests to back their objections. Education will not only reduce the already dwindling labour supply, but it might make the labourer less docile, and will upset the relationship between master and man that is at present so favourable to the master.

Of the total world population engaged in agricultural production only 15% are wage-earners, and the balance are individual owners. The position in South Africa is very different from that in other countries. In England, for example, about 50% of those engaged in agriculture are wage labourers, and in Japan probably not more than 12%. In the Union, if we exclude the Reserves where land is mostly held communally, 75% of the agricultural population consists of landless wage-earners. It is, however, the interest of the 25% that is paramount.

## 5. AGRICULTURAL WAGES

Agricultural wages in South Africa, as practically everywhere else in the world, are partly or totally in kind. Probably half of those employed on European farms in the Union receive no cash wage from their employers. In the Transvaal and Natal the system of wages in kind only predominates, while in the Free State and the Cape Province the wage is usually in cash and in kind. Where the wage in kind is the only wage, the contract usually takes the form of labour-tenancy—that is to say, the Native worker gives 90 days' service in exchange for residence, grazing, arable land, and for a ration of food while he is actually working. While not employed he is able to seek a cash wage in an urban area. There are no accurate figures available of the cash value to the labourer of this return for his services, but an average of £25 per year for a family of five would probably be an exaggeration.

The serious defects, both to employer and worker, of this system are obvious. In the first place, the farmer has to have living on his farm four times as much labour as he may require at any one moment, with the result that other areas suffer from a shortage of labour. In the second place, the worker is entirely dependent on the seasons for his living, and incomes show a great variation from farm to farm and from season to season. Further, the absence of written contracts, which are not feasible at the present time, lays the worker open to considerable illegal exploitation with very little prospect of redress in the lower courts. The system is wasteful of labour and destructive of land, but a large number of Natives prefer it because it gives them access to land and to grazing for their cattle. As long as European land is sufficiently plentiful and the Reserves sufficiently overcrowded, this system of



payment will probably continue, to the detriment of the country at large.

Where a cash wage is paid in addition to the wage in kind, local variations in income are almost as great, under both heads, as in the non-cash wage areas. There is no such thing as a standard wage, and no wage-regulating machinery is applicable to agricultural labour. The farmers in Parliament saw to that. In most parts of the Free State, where fairly typical conditions prevail, a cash wage varying from 5s. to 20s. a month is paid for an adult male, and the following items constitute the wage in kind :

- (i) about two morgen of arable land in the case of married men only; the farmer ploughs the land and provides the seed;
- (ii) grazing for a number of cattle and sheep, usually not more than about five animals;
- (iii) a hut which the worker builds for himself from material (mud and thatch) available on the farm;
- (iv) half a bag (90 lbs.) of maize meal per month, plus separated milk; vegetables and meat are very infrequently given as a ration, and the staple diet is maize meal;
- (v) water and fuel as available.

The cash equivalent of the arable and grazing land to the worker is about £9 per year, of his food about £2, while housing, water, and fuel cannot be evaluated, since there is no standard with which to compare them; their cost to the employer is negligible, and it is probably safest not to attempt to find a cash equivalent for them, but to consider them as a bare subsistence.

Women in domestic service on farms are paid at a much lower cash rate; when they are engaged for occasional labour such as weeding they are paid at piece rates. Children are paid up to 2s. 6d. per month, and casual labourers, engaged for reaping and shearing, are paid at piece rates plus the usual maize ration; the rate for shearing, for example, is 1d. per sheep, and regular workers who shear are paid at this rate in addition to their ordinary wage.

The regular agricultural labourer is able to augment his income by the sale of surplus produce such as eggs, poultry, skins, wool, and cattle. The amounts involved are small, and not always calculable, since a good deal of this produce is disposed of by way of barter at the small retail shops in the towns; in these transactions the Native seldom receives full value for his produce, since he buys in small quantities, is ignorant of market values, and is, through necessity, in a poor bargaining position. Not infrequently the worker's wool and maize are marketed with his employer's, and then he receives a better price. The total income of the worker from the sale of produce is probably not more than £10 per year.

The worker's income cannot support his family, and must be increased by the labour of his wife and children, both for the employer and on his own piece of land that forms part of his wage. The total cash income from wages for the family is about £10 per year.

To collect these scattered items and give them a cash equivalent for purposes of comparison is no easy matter, since wide variations exist, and because of the absence of reliable statistics that cover a wide area. The most recent investigations have shown, however, that for a family of five, of whom 2.5 are presumed to be working units, the income can be set out as in the following table.

TABLE X.

*Cash Equivalent of Family Income from all Sources of Natives Employed in Agriculture (per year).*

	£	s.	d.
Cash income from wages of family . . . . .	10	0	0
Cash from sale of produce or cash equivalent from barter of produce . . . . .	10	0	0
Cash equivalent of food provided by employer . . . . .	5	0	0
Cash equivalent of produce of arable and grazing land after subtracting the amount due to sale or barter from these two sources, which was included in the second item above . . . . .		5	0
Housing, water, and fuel . . . . .			0
			bare subsistence
Total . . . . .	£30	0	0

It will be seen thus that the cash income of a family of five is about £20 per year, or about 3d. per head per day, and that the food allowed by the employer plus that produced from the worker's land has a value of about £10 per year, or of 1½d. per head per day. The cash income of £20, therefore, must pay for additional food, such as tea, sugar, and meat, for clothing and blankets, household utensils, transport in the shape of a horse or a bicycle, medical attention, church fees, education, and a poll tax of £1 per year. It is hardly necessary to add that the farm labourer and his family are underfed, clothed in rags, badly housed, insufficiently covered at night, and, generally speaking, poverty-stricken. Nor is it surprising that a majority of agricultural labourers, like those in the Reserves, are in debt to their employers, sometimes to the extent of £10 or £15, or more than a year's wages.

The wage figures just given do not tell the whole story. The value of the wage to the worker is not the cost to the employer, and if we take the items listed above under wages in kind, we find that the value to the employer of grazing is negligible, that the value of housing, water, and fuel is negligible, since these are unsaleable commodities provided by Nature, that the food provided by the employer for a family of five costs him about £5, and the arable land may have a value of £2 per year for the employer. Since the cash wages paid by the employer are £10, the total value to

him of wages paid to a family of five is £17 per year; for this he receives the labour for one year of 2.5 labour units, and his cost per labourer is, therefore, about £7 per year. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that the official figures relating to agricultural wages assume that the farmer pays in cash what the worker receives. This unwarranted assumption has the result of exaggerating the supposed wage bill of the farmer.

Since so much of his wage depends on climatic conditions, the value of it to the worker fluctuates from farm to farm and from season to season. The value of the wage also depends on what crops are sown and what stock is kept. If we compare two workers doing exactly the same work and, ostensibly, on the same rate of pay, we might find that one, who grazes four cows, has an income 25% greater than the other, who grazes four oxen. Again, labourers in two neighbouring districts might, owing to differences in the productivity of the soil, find differences of as much as 20% in their incomes, though, on paper, the incomes were the same. The amount of arable land given as a wage is traditional and fairly constant, and it does not vary with the productivity of the soil or with annual rainfall. The number of cattle a farmer will allow a workman to graze does vary, and the general tendency is to restrict grazing rights.

Farmers do not really know the value of what they are paying their workers, and are thus unable to find out whether working costs are high or low. The evidence is that, during the last two generations, the amount of grazing has been continuously restricted, and that the very small increase in cash wages that has taken place during the same period has not made up for this loss to the labourer; to the worker the keeping of stock is his principal source of income as well as his racial pride. Agricultural wages have, therefore, fallen during the last fifty years, while production has increased. In other words, the farmer's labour costs have fallen relative to his production, and the labourer is receiving less and less of the product of his labour. If we take into account the increased cost of living since 1914 and the growing requirements of the Native in the matter of clothes and education, the Bantu agricultural labourer is considerably worse off now than he was then.

## 6. CONDITIONS OF LABOUR ON FARMS

A large number of the cases that arise under the various Masters and Servants Acts are due to alleged breach of contract on the part of the servant. These contracts are verbal, and are made for varying periods, commonly from harvest to harvest, or else for six months or one year. The unit of employment in the case of a married man is really the family, and not the individual; the employer stipulates for the labour of the wife and children when required. This is traditional with both farmers and Native labourers, and, while the system has obvious disadvantages, some authorities consider that it would be a mistake to alter it at this stage because of the damage such alteration would do to

tribal customs that have already suffered severe shocks from impact with Western ideas. With due respect to this opinion, it must be stated that, since the agricultural worker is in any case cut off from his tribal life, the sooner he acquires the benefits of his new status as a wage-earner the better. As it is, this aspect of the contract with his employer is a fruitful source of dispute that commonly ends to the disadvantage of the worker.

Complaints that farmers habitually defraud their workers by breaches of contract are ill-founded. It is, for example, stated that farmers deliberately seek a quarrel with an employee before the latter can harvest his crops; the blame is then put on the worker and, in court, the word of the European farmer is taken against that of the Native worker. That something like this does occasionally happen is true, and such an action on the part of the farmer would naturally assume large proportions in being reported by word of mouth among the Natives; but it is an uncommon occurrence. Most farmers would scruple to do such a thing, and, even if the Native is evicted, the law entitles him to reap his crop, so that it would be difficult for the farmer to gain by such an action. At the present time (1939) there is too great a shortage of labour for farmers to defraud their labourers, even if they wanted to. Although agricultural labour is not very mobile, it is well known that farmers who ill-treat their workers are unable to obtain labour when they most need it. The word soon passes round among Natives seeking work that certain farms are to be avoided.

The mobility of agricultural labour is impeded by pass laws and, more particularly, by debt. The pass laws prevent Natives from moving freely; but employers may not, and do not, refuse to grant a pass once the contract has been completed. If, however, the worker is in debt to his employer he will not be allowed to go unless he can find a new master who will take over his debt. A few farmers encourage debt as a means of retaining labour.

There are other factors making for the immobility of labour. The Native is by custom and inclination a peasant, and he loves cattle; he is therefore prepared to put up with a good deal in order to have the right to graze his cattle. The younger generation is more inclined to seek its fortune in the urban areas, and the world phenomenon of urbanisation has created both urban and rural problems in South Africa. The periodic shortage of agricultural labour is felt chiefly in the age categories of eighteen to thirty; but the older and more conservative Natives dislike the towns for themselves and complain that their children become undisciplined in the urban atmosphere. For these reasons the average length of service on a farm is surprisingly high, and most farmers have Native families that have been with them for more than a generation.

Hours of labour are "from sunrise to sunset", a well-nigh universal

custom, with the usual breaks for meals and rest. Agricultural conditions do not easily allow of the regulation of hours of work ; with crop-farming, for example, Nature prescribes a concentrated period of long hours during the reaping season, while animal husbandry and mixed farming demand more regular and continuous hours and days of work. Where, as in the majority of cases, oxen are used for ploughing, the workers benefit from the fact that oxen must rest during the hottest part of the day. South African Natives are not rapid workers, and there is little incentive for them to improve, since greater efficiency does not mean better wages ; when they are not supervised, or when the farmer is not working with them, they generally slacken off. Taking all things into consideration, the average day of an agricultural labourer is about eight or nine hours, and most farmers consider, probably with justice, that this means about six hours of effective work.

As with hours, so with days. There is no regulation, and there are no statutory paid holidays for agricultural workers. As a general rule the worker has a six-day week and the ordinary work of the farm ceases on Sundays ; milking must be done, and there is usually an arrangement by which the workers on one farm take turns to be freed from Sunday milking. What might be called occasional leave is granted, as the work permits, for perhaps fourteen days in the year ; there is no rule about payment for these days of leave, and some farmers do, and others do not, pay. The whole question of holidays, with or without pay, is entirely in the discretion of the employer.

Labour is not efficiently used on South African farms. The tradition is that African labour is of a low standard of efficiency, and quantity must make up for quality. In all agriculture that is not mechanised there is little differentiation of labour, and each worker is expected to be able to do any of the work required. The large size of many of the farms, too, causes much waste of time in going to and from work. There is little incentive to hard, skilful or efficient work, and, though many Natives are given responsible jobs on farms, they have no real opportunity of improving their technique ; as long as they obey orders the employer is not interested in whether they are becoming better farmers. It is the old vicious circle. Farmers say they cannot afford to pay better wages for such inefficient labour, and the low wages and absence of proper training result in continued inefficiency. The point is well illustrated by the story of a Native who, earning very good wages because he had an employer who appreciated efficiency, asked for and obtained leave for six months. Some time later his employer was astonished to find him working at half the wage for another farmer, and when he drew him aside to find out why this was, he was told, "You see, I do half as much work for this man as I do for you".

The diet of agricultural workers and their families is chiefly maize and separated milk, with such meat as is available from stock theft or

from animals that have died; the Natives are too superstitious to use the meat of animals that have died a clean death by lightning. Stock theft is severely punished, but many farmers close their eyes to a certain amount of it; it is, of course, the natural result of low wages and poor rations, though most farmers refuse to believe this, and stoutly maintain that maize meal is quite sufficient for Natives. Medical opinion differs, however, and states that the diet of farm labourers in South Africa is almost exclusively starchy and lacks the necessary protective food values; and, as a consequence, farm labourers and their families are subject to tuberculosis and to other diseases associated with poverty and under-nourishment. So low is the standard of health that it is doubtful whether agricultural labourers are reproducing themselves with sufficient rapidity to meet the expanding demand for labour. National policy has not, in the past, paid much heed to the warnings of experts that efficient labour cannot be expected from underfed workers. While a large section of the population, white and black, is unable to obtain dairy products and eggs, these articles are exported, and the export is subsidised by Government. Thus, in 1937, 30 million eggs were exported to London, while more than half the Union's population was too poor to buy eggs. It is an interesting commentary on the diet of farm labourers that farmers complain that Natives in gaol are better treated than on the farms; and this is supported by no less an authority than the Government Cape Coloured Commission which reported that "The evidence of District Surgeons all over the Union indicates that the prisoners in gaol invariably put on weight during the period of detention and hard labour, because of the fact that their diets are placed upon a more or less scientific basis with due regard to the calorific needs required by such prisoners".

## 7. LABOUR SHORTAGE ON FARMS

It was mentioned previously that urbanisation has proceeded at a rapid rate during the last twenty years. The causes of this are similar to what they are in other parts of the world where urbanisation is taking place, but the proposed remedies provide an instructive lesson in the relations between master and man in South Africa. The immediate reaction of the employer of Bantu agricultural labour, on being faced with a shortage of that labour, is to call out for restrictive legislation. The Native must not be allowed to go to the towns; life in the towns must not be made so "attractive"; industries, mines, and the Public Works Department must not be allowed to employ farm labourers, and must pay the wages "customary in the district", which means the farm wage; Government must recruit labour from outside the Union. One suggestion was that Chinese labour should be introduced for the mines, taken in sealed trains to the Rand, and carefully guarded; in this way the Natives on the mines would be released for farm labour, and the Chinese would

not become a menace to the country. The wealthy farmer who made this interesting suggestion was born in Great Britain.

In 1938 there were so many complaints of labour shortage on farms that the Government was compelled to side-track the discontent by appointing a Commission of investigation. One of the members of this Commission held the view that there was not enough labour in the Union to perform the work of the country, that the Native farm labourers were exploiting this position for their own benefit, and that foreign Natives should be recruited to break the monopoly of the Union Natives. The majority of the members of the Commission, however, held comparatively sane views on the subject, and were not very popular with the European farming community as a result.

In this matter the Government is in the usual cleft stick, a position occupied by all South African Governments. On the one hand, industries and mines cry out for more labour, and, on the other hand, farmers complain that their workers are drawn away by the mines and industries. In the circumstances Government is compelled to try to please both parties by restricting the entry of Natives into towns, by promising not to employ farm labourers on public works, and by extending the foreign recruiting areas for the mines. But, in spite of all restrictions, the process of urbanisation goes on because the Bantu are dissatisfied with conditions on the farms; thousands of Natives who pass through towns seeking work refuse all offers of agricultural employment, and, unless the Union resorts to real forced labour, the drift from the land will only be halted by improving farm conditions. General Hertzog himself, in defending minimum wage regulations for urban Natives, told an agricultural audience that if the farmers wanted more labour they should pay better wages.

#### 8. RESTRICTION OF PRODUCTION

One of the most important reasons why better wages are not paid is the fact that the Bantu agricultural labourer is not considered as a producer who would, with a better land policy, increase the national wealth of the Union. Only 7% of all European farm land is under cultivation, and an immediate increase in wages could be achieved by increasing the amount of arable land given to labourers; this would, at the same time, augment the total agricultural production of the country. As things are, a small European population owns the land, which it does not utilise fully, and the potential African producer is debarred from access to that land; the result is that a predominantly agricultural country with a sparse population does not produce enough food to feed its inhabitants. And a proportion of the foodstuffs that are produced are exported in the interests of one-twelfth of the population. Wheat, beef, maize, dairy products, eggs, and fruit are all exported by Government aid to feed the people of other countries, while the majority of the

inhabitants of the Union are habitually underfed and have to go to gaol to get a square meal. In 1939, with the world price of wheat at 12s. a bag, Government guaranteed farmers 21s. and kept out foreign wheat. In the matter of corn laws England has found an apt pupil in South Africa.

Agriculture in the Union is, in fact, a State industry run in the interests of a small number of individuals who contribute relatively little, either directly or indirectly, to national revenue, and who are uncontrolled by the State that subsidises them. While it is perfectly true that agriculture, especially in a country such as South Africa, is much more precarious an undertaking than industry, is much more sensitive to economic storms, is less easy to adjust to altering markets, and, therefore, demands a higher rate of interest, it is also a fact that the gap between the incomes and standards of living of agricultural worker and landowner is far greater than is warranted by the risks of agricultural undertaking. In one typical farming province, the Free State, there are nine motor-cars to every one taxpayer, and very few of the farmers who own motor-cars pay income tax. This ownership of motor-cars is a symbol of the relatively high standard of living enjoyed by the landowners; it is also a partial explanation of the low wage rates in agriculture. As long as the production of wealth is artificially restricted by land policy, and as long as the wealth that is produced is maldistributed, so that the owner has an income of roughly twenty times that of the worker, so long will wages remain low.

There is evidence of growing discontent among agricultural labourers, and farmers are eloquent about "communist agitators" and "kaffir-boeties" (literally, "kaffir brothers"—that is, people who advocate justice for the Bantu), who spoil the Natives and put ideas into their heads. But, in sober fact, there is very little chance of an organised movement among the farm labourers. Ignorance, poverty, isolation, fear, and legal restrictions combine to prevent the birth of such a movement. In the economic and social circumstances of South Africa an African John Ball is unlikely to arise.

The agricultural position in the Union may be conveniently summed up as follows: uneconomic division of land, inefficient use of labour, and unscientific methods of farming result in an under-production of essential foodstuffs for the nation; in these circumstances the unequal division of wealth, and, therefore, of political power, operates to protect the interests of the landowners, while the interests of the majority of those engaged in agriculture are neglected. This is done by financially encouraging the export of food from a country where under-nourishment is rife, and by assisting the landowner directly to maintain his uneconomic hold on the land without unduly disturbing the exploiting power of the banks and of the middlemen. The farmers exploit Native labour, and the banks and the middlemen exploit the farmer. Through the banks all



agricultural production pays its tribute to shareholders in the Union and in Great Britain.

#### 9. MASTER AND MAN

"Stables, cow-houses, and open sheds should not be used for sleeping quarters." This quotation is not taken from a negrophilist report on South Africa, but from a resolution of the Agricultural Conference at Geneva in 1931. From the same source comes the information that in France some 200,000 agricultural workers sleep in cowsheds, stables, and barns. In Germany, France, England, and Switzerland, as well as in South Africa and India, children of immature age are employed in agriculture; the diet and housing of Negro and European workers in the American share-cropping cotton areas are considerably lower than those which prevail on South African farms.

These facts are merely a reminder that only a very small percentage of agricultural labourers throughout the world have an adequate, not to say decent, standard of living. South Africa is no exception to the rule, and in many respects her agricultural labourers are better off than in other countries. In the Union, as elsewhere, relations between master and man in agriculture are more paternal than free; a greater degree of docility is required, perhaps, because of the additional social and race differences, but in essence the relationship is the economic one of landowner to dispossessed and unorganised workers, a relationship prevailing on that portion of the earth's surface where capitalist production is the rule.

Though the relationship in South Africa between employer and worker in agriculture is undergoing changes, there is still sufficient friendly toleration on the part of European employers, and sufficient patience on the part of African workers, to mitigate what might, in other countries, constitute very harsh conditions. Natives value very highly what they call "peace" and friendly human relations, and on the vast majority of farms the European "baas" has the tolerant attitude of unconscious superiority. He calls his workers by their Christian names, and, often, by a humorous nickname; he makes allowances for their weaknesses; he allows the dependents of a breadwinner who has left his service to go on occupying land on his farm; he puts up with inefficiency in a patiently ironic way, regarding it as of divine dispensation. The picture frequently drawn of the harsh, horse-whipping, sadistic farmer is almost totally devoid of truth, and to judge all South African farmers, English or Afrikaans, by the comparatively few cases of brutality, is to misconceive both the social and the economic condition of the rural areas. The spacious and leisurely life on a South African farm has serious economic drawbacks; and that is in itself a measure of the tolerant human relations that exist. But there are plenty of signs that the "good old times" are passing and that economic pressure is increasing; and when that happens under capitalism, social relations deteriorate.

## CHAPTER V

### TOWN LIFE

#### I. DISTRIBUTION OF URBAN POPULATION

TABLES V and VI disclosed the fact that almost half the urban population of the Union lives in the five largest towns. The following tables analyse the position more closely:

TABLE XI.

*Distribution of Urban Population by Race and Province (1936).*

Province.	European.	Bantu.	Asiatic.	Coloured.	Total.
Cape . . .	503,997	219,229	10,198	356,368	1,089,792
Natal . . .	145,510	127,920	113,549	12,493	399,472
Transvaal . .	566,066	690,505	21,820	37,591	1,315,982
Free State . .	91,813	103,988	29	8,455	204,285
Total . . .	1,307,386	1,141,642	145,596	414,907	3,109,531

TABLE XII.

*Distribution of Population by Race in the Largest Towns (1936).*

Town.	European.	Bantu.	Asiatic.	Coloured.	Total.
Cape Town and suburbs . . .	173,412	14,160	3,740	152,911	344,223
Port Elizabeth . .	53,461	28,290	2,459	25,631	109,841
East London . . .	31,311	24,388	853	4,011	60,563
Kimberley . . .	15,741	14,499	977	9,014	40,231
Durban . . .	95,033	68,698	88,226	7,649	259,606
P.M. Burg . . .	22,446	15,671	9,088	2,334	49,539
Witwatersrand area * . .	402,223	570,726	14,183	30,058	1,017,190
Pretoria . . .	76,935	45,312	2,982	3,392	128,621
Bloemfontein . .	30,291	31,042	8	2,892	64,233
Total . . .	900,853	812,786	122,516	237,892	2,074,047

\* Includes the whole urban area of Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand mining area.

As regards the remaining towns and villages, of which we noted that about 70% had populations of less than 2,500, it is roughly true to say

that there are as many Europeans as non-Europeans in each of them, and that, of the non-Europeans, the Coloured population predominates in the Western Province of the Cape, the Bantu in the Eastern Province and in the Free State, and that in Natal the division between Bantu and Asiatic is fairly even.

## 2. EUROPEANS, COLOURED, AND ASIATICS

In most towns the Bantu population is segregated, and lives in locations. To these we shall return when we have dealt with the other racial groups.

The European towns do not require detailed description, being, in essence, like those in any of the newer countries. Most of them lack the dignity that comes with centuries of growth, but have some of the advantages of modernity in the shape of electricity, up-to-date shops, and spacious parks. The larger centres are well equipped with fine public buildings, and with slums in which poor Europeans, Coloureds, and Asiatics often live side by side. The smaller towns are much like those described by Mr. Lewis in *Main Street*; social distinctions based on wealth lead to petty bourgeois snobbery and foster the growth of a so-called civic pride that demands a town hall well beyond its economic capacity, but ceases to function when it comes to housing its poorer inhabitants. These towns are really market towns for the surrounding farms.

In the Free State, Asiatics are not allowed to reside permanently, but there is no effective legal bar to their acquiring urban property in the remaining provinces. In the Cape Province both Asiatics and Coloureds may, and do, own urban property, but the opposition to their residing in markedly European quarters is growing rapidly. In the early part of 1939 the Nationalist Party set on foot an agitation for separate residential areas throughout the Union, and the petition that was circulated was widely signed by Europeans of both political parties. A meeting of taxpayers held at Pretoria in November 1928 expressed clearly what the objections to Asiatic penetration into European quarters are: depreciation in land values; the gradual change to slum conditions, since Asiatics are prone to sub-letting; social deterioration, since European and Asiatic children would play together; miscegenation. In Cape Town, where Coloureds as well as Asiatics have the right to purchase land in urban areas, the same reasons are advanced for empowering local authorities to segregate the Coloureds. When it seemed as if the Government was going to bow before the storm of Nationalist agitation, a protest demonstration of Coloureds at Cape Town, led by Communists, marched to Parliament and came to blows with the police. The Coloureds have the vote in the Cape, and a mass demonstration by them must be taken seriously by Parliament; and so the question was shelved.

The whole question of residential areas for the different racial groups bristles with difficulties, and cannot be solved by the parrot-cry of

"Equality". There are vast social and economic differences between white, black, and brown, and, while it is obvious that slum areas are not due to colour, but to economic exploitation, there is not the slightest doubt that in the present economic circumstances social deterioration does set in in the vast majority of cases where mixed residential areas are the rule. This deterioration affects all races, but is more particularly noticeable in the case of the European. Racial differences cannot be liquidated by a superficial social and economic equality. Generations of culture and education are not attained at a bound. Those who supported the petition from a genuine concern at the conditions prevailing in mixed slum areas are probably right when they maintain that, in the present circumstances, separate areas would be to the advantage of all races. Such a policy would, however, have to be accompanied by a vigorous attack on the problem of slum clearance and by a progressive social and educational policy. Since the real motives of the majority of those who signed the petition are to safeguard their own property and to shuffle off any financial responsibilities for the non-European poor, it is unlikely that residential segregation will, in practice, be accompanied by any social policy that may cost the taxpayer more money.

The Coloured people by no means all live in slum areas. Numbers of them are skilled artisans drawing good wages, and they are admitted to Trade Unions in the Cape. Educationally, socially, and economically they are much better off than the Native urbanite, and they are frequently better off than the poor white. In the Cape Province, and particularly in the larger urban centres, cheap intoxicating liquor plays havoc with their health and with their earnings. The liquor trade flourishes at their expense, and Saturday evenings in a Coloured district have to be seen to be believed; assaults are frequent, and in Cape Town the so-called "Skolly gangs" are a public menace, rendering many parts of the town unsafe for European women at night. These social conditions are due to the practically unrestricted traffic in cheap drink, to the absence of facilities for a decent social life, to poverty, and to the somewhat unrestrained emotional characteristics of the Coloured population. In the other provinces, where the liquor laws are more severe and where separate areas are provided, the Coloured community form a law-abiding class of skilled and semi-skilled artisans, a social class above the African, with whom the Coloured do not, as a rule, mix.

Asiatics throughout the Union, though suffering from legal disabilities, are usually better off than the Coloureds. They certainly regard themselves as belonging to a superior class.

### 3. THE URBAN BANTU

The most numerous and the lowest social and economic class in the towns is the Bantu. The following table shows the urban distribution of this class.

**TABLE XIII.**  
*Distribution of Urban Bantu by Sex and Area (1936).*

	Male.	Female.	Total.
1. European towns . . . . .	234,156	156,239	390,395
2. Locations adjacent to European towns . . . . .	165,520	189,647	355,167
3. Rural suburbs . . . . .	6,545	4,760	11,305
4. Rural townships . . . . .	19,444	16,401	35,845
5. Native townships . . . . .	14,655	17,094	31,749
Total of 1-5 . . . . .	440,320	384,141	824,461
6. Alluvial diggings . . . . .	14,883	9,749	24,632
7. Mine compounds . . . . .	371,323	15,535	386,858
8. Industrial compounds . . . . .	102,832	10,904	113,736
9. Municipal compounds . . . . .	34,321	1,819	36,050
10. Construction gangs . . . . .	41,414	1,781	43,195
11. Other . . . . .	8,670	956	9,626
Total of 6-11 . . . . .	573,443	40,744	614,097
Grand total . . . . .	1,013,763	424,885	1,438,558

Items 6-11 in the above table represent the mining and industrial position, and will be dealt with subsequently. The majority of the Africans enumerated under items 1-5 are not primarily connected with any large industrial undertaking, but live in or near European towns to do the menial work of those towns. They are employed as follows: domestic servants; gardeners; messengers for shops, banks, and legal offices; unskilled and semi-skilled assistants to European builders, brickmakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, garage-owners, bootmakers, and other artisans; hotel waiters; municipal scavenging; unskilled workers in small industrial undertakings; and in many other ways too numerous to mention. In South Africa, outside of the Western Province, where the Coloured takes the place of the African, you are called with the morning cup of tea by a Native, and for the rest of the day served by him in a hundred-and-one different ways. Natives cook the meals, scrub the floors, wash the dishes, and mind the baby; they deliver the meat, the milk, the bread, and the groceries; they fill the cars with petrol at the service stations. If a European plumber repairs a leaky roof he has a Native assistant who carries and holds the ladder; if a house is built, Natives do the digging and the fetching and carrying; if a Government electrician does repairs on a public building a Native is in attendance to hand him the correct tools at the proper moment. Government and professional men's offices are swept and cleaned each morning by a Native, who will subsequently be sent on errands, which include the banking of the day's takings. But

there is no hope that the doing of these jobs will ever lead to the better position to which long experience and ability might entitle the doer; as we shall see later, custom and legislation effectively prevent that.

In urban locations and Native townships Africans are employed in the service of their own people as teachers, clerks, ministers of religion, artisans, sanitary inspectors, nurses; there are even a few doctors. These locations are really separate townships, a short distance from the European area, and, as will be seen presently, have a separate community life that is economically dependent on the European township. These locations represent the principle of segregation in urban areas.

#### 4. HOUSING OF NATIVES IN EUROPEAN AREAS

Those Natives who live inside the municipal boundaries often lodge with their employers—in the best cases in neat rooms separate from the main building, and in the worst cases in lean-to's, shacks, or other out-buildings. The quality of accommodation provided for domestic servants may be judged from the fact that the most advanced local authorities lay down by regulation that, *with new houses*, the servants' quarters may not be less than 10 ft. by 10 ft.

The Urban Areas Act of 1923, and its subsequent amendments, place the responsibility for housing on local authorities, and in the short time since the passage of the Act many of the larger municipalities have gone a long way towards improving housing conditions by slum clearance inside the municipal boundaries and by the provision of more houses in the locations. But under capitalism the difficulties are great. South African towns, like the equivalent British industrial towns of a century ago, grew up with very little control, and vested interests in town properties have played the same rôle in the Union as they did in Britain. Further, most Europeans regard the urban Natives purely in the light of a temporary labour force, until now apparently inexhaustible, and still speak about locations as "reservoirs of labour". A liberal European minority, together with the growing difficulty of "getting servants", has begun to have its effect on the larger municipalities, but the following quotations will serve to show the strength of vested interests in hindering progress towards better housing:

First quotation: "Of its 3,837 families living in more congested conditions than two persons to a room, there were sixty-nine families of six persons, 152 of five, and 305 of four, with only one room to live in".

Second quotation: "The density of population in these yards is over 4,000,000 to the square mile. There are on an average 64 sq. ft. per inhabitant—a space of 8 ft. by 8 ft.—for living-rooms, yards, and space to hang out washing to dry. Like all slum properties, these yards are very lucrative to the owners".

The first of these quotations is from a report on Bermondsey, very near the heart of the British Empire; the second is from a report on Johannes-

burg, one of the wealthiest cities in the British Commonwealth of Nations. The first deals with white workers, the second with black. White or black, neither set of workers would appear to have much cause for gratification in belonging to an Empire upon which the sun never sets; doubtless the owners of the slum properties in question, to whom the properties are "lucrative", would contemplate the Empire with greater satisfaction.

These quotations are placed in juxtaposition as a warning to readers not to allow their moral indignation at conditions 6,000 miles away to blind them to what is at their doors. It is not the wicked South Africans who treat their Natives so badly; it is the exploitation of labour, in London and in Johannesburg, that results in these evil conditions.

## 5. URBAN LOCATIONS

Most South Africans, and most visitors to South Africa, when they are interested in the conditions under which the inhabitants live rather than in the more picturesque National Game Reserve, think first of the locations when they think of the urban Native. Actually, as Table XIII shows, there are almost as many Natives living inside the boundaries of municipal areas as there are in the adjacent locations; but there are two reasons why the extra-urban locations assume a greater importance. In the first place, the locations form compact groups of Natives, while the Africans who live in the European areas are scattered; in the second place, the national policy is to foster the growth of locations as part of the policy of segregation. The fact that there are still so many Natives living in the European quarters and not in separate townships is regarded as a regrettable temporary arrangement; and, indeed, under existing economic and social conditions, the creation of more and better locations is highly desirable in the interests of the Natives themselves. The real question is not so much whether locations should be established, but how they should be controlled and financed; and cognate to this is the vital question of the motives that lie behind this policy of segregation in urban areas. A description of some of the main features of urban locations is necessary before this final question of motive can be dealt with.

Since about 70% of the urban Bantu population is concentrated in about 2% of the urban areas, it is advisable to deal with the large and small towns separately; the large towns are those shown in Table XII. In all cases locations are situated some distance from the European townships, and as a general rule the best residential areas of both location and town are those farthest away from the common boundary. Near the boundary, on the European side, will be found the innumerable retail stores that cater for the Native trade, and, drab though they are inside, the outside of these stores presents a colourful display of blankets, shawls, and bright trinkets. Though they are frequently financed by the wholesale firms, these stores are usually owned by Asiatics and Jews, and, less

frequently, by Natives. There is, of course, nothing to prevent Natives from patronising the larger shops in the European quarter, and these obtain a fair proportion of the Native trade.

As you leave the centre of the European town to go towards the location the scene becomes more and more drab, dusty, and dreary; the roads deteriorate, once the town is left behind, and the houses speak immediately and volubly of poverty, filth, and overcrowding. With a few unimportant exceptions, Africans may not own land in freehold outside of the Reserves, and the problem of housing the urban Natives on land they may never own has been tackled in different ways by the local authorities in the big towns.

In Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State, a Native who has obtained work in the town has allocated to him a stand or plot, for which he pays a monthly rental of 6s.; this sum includes sanitary services and the supply of water at street taps. He is then advanced about £35 worth of material, and, using a very good local clay, builds his own house in his spare time to a plan approved by the local authorities. These houses are usually four-roomed, each room being 12 ft. by 12 ft.; they are well built, when we consider that the skill of the builder is that acquired in the unskilled service of a European. The house now belongs to the builder for as long as he pays his rent and the interest and redemption on his loan; if he leaves the location he may sell, either privately or to the local authority. The Bloemfontein system has many advantages for the Native, particularly that of cheapness; but the absence of freehold rights to the land on which his house stands is a serious drawback that is mitigated only by sympathetic administration.

In practically all other large centres the local authorities have followed what is known, in contrast to Bloemfontein, as the Johannesburg system, under which the municipality itself builds two-, three-, or four-roomed houses and rents them to Natives on a monthly basis. These houses are better constructed than those in Bloemfontein because skilled European labour is used; but the Trade Union rates of pay for European workers are so high that the rents charged to cover the capital expenditure are far too heavy for the average Native worker. Further, new locations have frequently been established at considerable distances from the European towns where the inhabitants of the locations are employed, and the cost of daily transport to and from work makes a big addition to the worker's expenditure.

The practice of using skilled European labour to construct houses for Natives has been severely criticised, particularly by Government commissions, on the economic grounds that the high cost over-capitalises the location from the start and produces an almost permanent state of indebtedness in the Native Revenue Account. What is not mentioned by commissions is that Native housing schemes form a useful field for investment. The local authority borrows money from European investors at



market rates and guarantees the interest ; it then has to charge high rents to the Natives so as to make sure that the Native Revenue Account will be able to pay the interest and redemption on the loans. Since the Native Revenue Account is kept separately from the main accounts of the local authority, there is no danger that European ratepayers' money will be used to finance Native housing. In this ingenious way the interests of the ratepayers and of the European investors in Native housing schemes are amply protected at the expense of the Natives. When the Johannesburg Municipality talks proudly of the millions of pounds "it" has spent on Native housing, it should be remembered that it is, in practice, the Natives who foot the bill ; the ratepayers' share in the transaction has been to guarantee a safe investment for the Europeans and to shuffle out of any financial responsibility for Native housing. Even where Parliament has provided the inadequate sum of £2,000,000 at the economic and sub-economic rates of interest for Native housing schemes, it is still the Native who pays. Further, the provision of money at sub-economic rates is, in practice, a subsidy on wages to employers of labour.

Housing for Africans in the larger urban centres is hopelessly inadequate. In Durban, the biggest English-speaking centre in the Union, the accommodation for Natives consists largely of hostels for single men and women and about 140 cottages for married couples ; in other words, the local authorities legally responsible for the housing of Natives have provided "accommodation" for about 12,000 out of the 68,000 Africans in Durban. Of the Natives not accommodated by the Durban Municipal Council, possibly 15,000 live with their employers, about 10,000 live in industrial compounds, and the balance of about 30,000 live either in uncontrolled mushroom locations outside Durban, or else in slum areas where they hire rooms at exorbitant rates from Asiatics or from other Natives. Similar conditions prevail in Cape Town, East London, and the other large urban centres. Visitors to Pretoria, the administrative capital of the Union, might gain a more accurate if less pleasant impression of South Africa if, after seeing the spacious Union Buildings, they were to tour the Native locations ; they should not forget to enquire who pays the high rent for the filthy slum properties they will find, and who receives the interest on the money advanced to build them.

The inevitable result of the inadequacy of housing in the urban locations is gross overcrowding. It is probable that, on an average of the largest towns, Natives live three or four to a room of about 100 sq. ft. of space. Most of the houses are badly constructed and do not keep out wind and rain ; they are insanitary and devoid of any but the barest of broken-down furniture ; the rent charged for them is, as with all slum properties, high. In the majority of cases African workers do not possess their own houses and have to lodge with other Natives ; economic exploitation knows no colour bars, though it may create them, and Native householders charge exorbitant rents to fellow-Africans for a space to

sleep in. As much as £1 to £1 10s. per month is charged for part of a room by Natives to Natives whose monthly income is £3 or £4. The municipality gets its cut from this rent by charging the householder a lodger's fee of 2s. per month.

The large majority of towns have small populations, and in most cases the local authorities make very little effort to provide housing or anything else; in these locations houses are usually erected by the Natives themselves from mud bricks and such scrap material as can be bought cheaply or picked up on the municipal rubbish-heap. However poor the houses or their inhabitants, rates must be paid to the local authority. The smaller the town the poorer the location, for the earning capacity of the Natives is low, and, as will be seen more clearly presently, everything in the locations must be paid for by the Native inhabitants themselves.

In all but a minute percentage of urban locations water-borne sewage is unknown, as, indeed, it is in the majority of small European towns. Removal of rubbish and of night-soil is, therefore, a sanitary service undertaken by the local authority and charged for at the same rate as for Europeans. The service for Europeans is far superior to that for Natives, and by charging the same rates the local authorities are making a profit, illegally, out of the locations. Most locations have neither streets nor artificial lighting; water is sometimes laid on to street taps, but very seldom to the houses, and many location inhabitants have to walk two or three miles to obtain any water at all.

## 6. SOCIAL LIFE IN LOCATIONS

In the largest urban locations there are recreation grounds, a cinema (still called "bioscope" in South Africa), social centres, and clubs. The churches, of which there is a great variety in addition to the Native branches of the European churches, provide some of the centres around which community life can cluster, and Government-aided schools assist European social organisations in providing outlet for the activities of boys and girls. These social organisations, however, touch the fringe of the population only, and for the vast masses who have migrated to the towns, driven by lack of land and by taxation, there is no social life to take the place of that in the old Native village. Nor is there in the locations any adequate substitute for those tribal customs from which the urban Natives have been divorced. Their social organisations follow European models, but they have not yet to any large extent absorbed European ideas; and the background of Native custom is not a very sure foundation upon which thoughtlessly to raise a European superstructure.

Some of the complications that arise from the urbanisation of the African, and the difficulties they experience of adapting their customs to European conceptions, are illustrated by the effect of the interaction of town life and Bantu marriage customs. In typical Bantu society there were no widows and orphans, for at the death of the husband a woman

and her children remained with her family-in-law and she became the wife of a brother or other relative of her husband. This afforded her and her children constant protection; and the system of *lobola* prevented her status from deteriorating. Under simple tribal conditions the payment of *lobola* in cattle, as a compensation to the woman's clan, immediately placed her under the legal protection of her husband's clan; at the same time, her maternal uncle still exercised a natural guardianship. Until the full *lobola* was paid, moreover, the rights and responsibilities of the husband were not fully established. Now, though the law to-day recognises *lobola*, it is practically impossible, in the crowded urban areas with their shifting population, to obtain reliable evidence as to whether *lobola* has or has not been paid; in the tribal village it was, and is, a simple matter to do so. Thus in the urban areas, men and women contract temporary alliances and desert their partners when it suits them; the natural result is a large number of illegitimate children who swell the ranks of the juvenile delinquents. Probably 50% of the unions in urban areas have been registered neither in a church nor according to Native custom. There is another point. Men in town who wish to get married find it impossible to make the *lobola* payment in cattle, and so a money payment has come to be substituted. This has degraded the *lobola* system and has impoverished many a man before marriage; since no receipt is given for *lobola* payments—with living cattle no receipt was necessary—this adds to the difficulties of proof in case of a law-suit.

In spite of everything, the Bantu cling tenaciously to their marriage customs—customs that were socially valuable under tribalism, but have serious social effects on the life of the communities developing in the urban areas. On the one hand, the economic conditions that are characteristic of life in the new Native urban communities destroy the essential meaning and value of *lobola*; on the other hand, the persistence of the custom produces difficult social and economic situations. For a man to take his deceased brother's wife is sound in Bantu society, but under capitalism the perpetuation of this custom lowers the standard of living by relieving the general revenue of its obligations towards widows and orphans.

This question of customary marriage is a typical illustration of the social and economic conflicts that have arisen among the Africans in urban areas as the result of the impact between a primitive communalism and an individualist and capitalist society.

## 7. WAGES, INCOMES, AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Wages in mines and industries will be dealt with in a separate chapter, and this section will be confined to the categories 1–5 of Table XIII. Once more, as with housing, it is necessary to distinguish between the large and the small towns.

Wage rates for Natives differ so greatly from centre to centre, and there

is, comparatively, so little regulation of Native wages, that we have to depend on very meagre statistics to obtain an idea of how much the African earns in towns. The figures that follow are based on determinations made by the Wage Board and on information collected by the Union Department of Statistics.

It should be realised at the outset that Native wages are subject to a continual downward pressure from the Reserves and the Protectorates; also, the labour market is very unstable. Temporary workers from the Reserves undercut the permanent town-dwellers who have lost their footing in the Reserves.

Dealing first with the very large class of domestic servants, their monthly wages may vary from 7s. 6d. in a small town, through £1 10s. in a larger town, to £5 in such a centre as Johannesburg; in each case food and lodging must be added to the cash wage. As messengers for professional men, for shops, for banks, and as waiters in hotels, the Native male may earn from £1 a month in a small town to £5 in Johannesburg; in these cases food and lodging are not added to the cash wage. In the building trade Natives in the larger towns receive between £4 and £5 a month, while recent rates (1939) laid down in the distributive trades for a few large centres vary between £3 and £6 10s. a month, without food and lodging; in the smaller centres these rates are about 40% less. Wages for municipal employees are usually very slightly in advance of wages in trade, while the wages of a very large number of Natives employed otherwise than in the categories just mentioned are considerably below those in trade. It is interesting to note that the Railway Administration, a State concern and a large employer of Native labour, is not bound by the rates determined by the Wage Board, a statutory authority; the wages paid on the railways are usually lower than those in industry and trade. Other Government employees, such as interpreters and school-teachers, are paid at a slightly higher rate than in trade.

As a generalisation on wages for Natives in urban areas we may agree with the Chairman of the Associated Chambers of Commerce when he stated, in November 1938, that the wages of urban workers seldom rise above £3-£4 a month. Since we must now see what these wages are expected to buy, it is worth while to quote some further remarks of the Chairman. "A minimum diet for a family of five", he said, "worked out roughly at £3 10s. per month, leaving 10s. for taxes, rent, clothing, light, fuel, soap, blankets, and transport. Rent alone was between 20s. and 30s. The result is that married life is well-nigh impossible. At least half the children die of malnutrition—a polite word for semi-starvation—and those who survive grow up poor, sickly, and unable to resist disease." The Conference of the Associated Chambers of Commerce took a decision, after the Chairman's remarks, to ask the Government to call a conference on Native wages.

The remarks just quoted do not exaggerate the position. Cost-of-living enquiries made about ten years ago revealed the fact that in the larger urban locations the monthly cost for a family of five was not less than £6 10s. Since the breadwinner's wage seldom equals this amount, his wife and children are compelled to enter the labour market, thus further depressing wages. Women earn money as washerwomen, as domestic servants, by prostitution, and by the illicit manufacture and sale of strong drink; children pick up odd jobs, such as caddying for golfers. Education is not compulsory for Natives, and, together with the lack of parental control, this helps to swell the ranks of the juvenile offenders.

Natives who work in shops and offices must be properly dressed, and, consequently, the usual thing happens: money is saved off food to buy clothes. Also, just as in the Reserves and on the farms, large numbers of Natives are in a continuous state of debt. Medical officers and doctors in charge of hospitals are constantly stating that the majority of Natives admitted to hospitals show signs of underfeeding; recently Natives employed by the Free State Provincial Council on road construction were found to be suffering from pellagra, a malnutritious disease. Dr. Cluver, when Medical Officer of Health for the Union, stated that undernourishment was primarily due to low purchasing power; but, on the other hand, Dr. Fox of the South African Institute for Medical Research maintained that "much of the poverty of Natives was due to ignorance, lack of industry, improvidence and a lack of adaptability to changes in environment". Not, he it noticed, to low wages. Most medical opinion, of course, places "lack of industry" as a result, not as a cause, of malnutrition; and the primary cause is low wages.

It is possible that school history text-books still repeat the stale joke that one of the differences between pre-French Revolutionary Europe and our own times is that distinctions in the matter of clothes have disappeared. A casual visit to any South African location will soon dispel any belief of that kind. Most of the inhabitants, men, women, and children, are far too poor to buy proper clothes, and cast-off clothing, often become filthy rags, is more general than even the cheapest of ready-made garments. The sub-clerk class, indeed, must be properly dressed even if it gets into debt to do so; but the mass of the workers and their families have no such obligations, and the contrast of their dress with that of European workers in South Africa is even greater than the six or seven to one ratio of their wages would indicate.

Hours and days of work are unregulated for African workers; but since they usually work alongside European artisans they benefit from the fixed hours that the Trade Unions have been able to secure. Most of the Natives employed by the Government, the municipalities, or the professions, or in commerce and industry, have an eight-hour day and a five-and-a-half-day week, while they benefit from the European observance of public holidays. This regularity of hours and days is one of the

attractions of town life to the farm labourer. Domestic servants have far longer hours, often as many as fourteen a day, and they usually have a six-and-a-half-day week; they seldom enjoy the advantages of public holidays. Unless domestic servants are employed by professional people or by others who can afford an annual holiday, they have no paid holidays during the year; as on the farms, however, they may be allowed as much as fourteen days off with pay for private reasons or for ill-health.

In practically all urban locations, but particularly in those of the nine largest towns, there are numerous Natives engaged in some gainful activity among their own people; they are skilled and semi-skilled artisans, tradesmen, and professional men and women, and it is impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy what their incomes are. Probably they have slightly larger incomes than those employed with Europeans, but the incomes are also less secure. On the Witwatersrand there are more than 500 Native-owned retail stores, and in other centres the numbers are proportionately less. In the Free State, however—and readers will by this time have been struck by the irony of the name—direct trading by Natives in their own locations is not allowed by law. The municipal councils of the Free State are all opposed to the granting of trading licences to Natives, and, though Parliament has passed legislation enabling the Minister of Native Affairs to compel local authorities to grant licences, no Government has yet been strong enough to do this. Many Europeans are in favour of trading licences, and the organised opposition comes, for obvious reasons, from the numerous small retail dealers near the locations. Licences to hawk and to run eating-houses are granted, and the eating-houses, to the activities of whose owners the authorities often turn a blind eye, are not easily distinguishable from retail shops. Thus, as so often happens in South Africa, the legislative bark is worse than the administrative bite; but the steadfast refusal to grant full trading rights in the Free State locations is a natural source of irritation to the Africans. In August 1939 the Free State African Trading Association decided to boycott all Free State commercial enterprises in future and to purchase their stocks from wholesale dealers in other provinces. It remains to be seen in how far this protest will force European traders to abandon their opposition to trading rights for Natives. It must be added that, from the evidence from the Witwatersrand, Native retail stores are not unusually successful business ventures, and the Bantu have a great deal to learn in the matter of book-keeping. Not infrequently, too, the Native-owned store is backed by European-owned capital, and the nominal owner is a commercial dummy.

#### 8. BANTU BOURGEOISIE

There is ample evidence that a Bantu bourgeoisie has come into being in the urban areas. It consists of traders, officials, school-teachers, minis-

ters of religion, and the better-paid office employees. In the large urban centres these people form clubs and societies from which there is a definite attempt to exclude the mere manual worker, unless he be a journeyman artisan or builder who himself employs other Natives as unskilled labour. These educated and semi-educated Africans are still very much concerned with their own social position, and have no idea of raising the mass of the workers to fight for improvement in their condition; their economic position, as they see it, is associated with the European rather than with the depressed Bantu worker. What movements of revolt there have been in the past have had practically no support from this petty-bourgeois class. At the same time they are, by their education and position, the people with whom any liberal movement among Europeans naturally associates itself; and this association, together with their relatively good economic position, makes them feel that they have more to lose than their chains.

On the whole they are an unhappy class of people, bitterly resenting the indignities that they have to suffer in company with uneducated Natives; they have achieved a standard of living high enough to make them at once dissatisfied with life and fearful of losing what they have achieved. The members of this class often suffer from inferiority complexes, and lack the dignity of the Natives in the Reserves; their club activities are hampered by petty jealousies and squabbling for position, and tend to break up into rival organisations. The bourgeois Bantu are sensitive to criticism, and many of them resent Europeans who, with the best intentions, try to assist them; genuine efforts on the part of Europeans at co-operation are usually recognised and valued, but there is often a strong undercurrent of suspicion. On the other hand, of course, many Europeans who are "interested in Native work" regard it as a form of charity, and not as a co-operative effort between human beings, and it is understandable that Natives of the middle-class, not yet firmly established, will resent patronage. Genuine co-operation requires infinite patience on the part of both races. Europeans have to put up with an indifference to time that allows an eight o'clock meeting to begin at nine o'clock and is most exasperating to busy men and women; they have to allow for a fondness for debate that will cheerfully allow an evening to be spent on the debate of one point on the agenda, sucking the last ounce of flavour from it; they have to remember that Natives have had little experience of dealing with trust money and that a Bantu treasurer is quite capable of openly disbursing the funds of a society to necessitous non-members. From their side, the Bantu have to put up with Europeans who insist on working to time, dislike protracted debates, require great accuracy in money matters, and who often fail to understand the difficulties that handicap the Natives. In the difficult business of co-operation between Bantu and European there is one characteristic of the Africans that makes up for a great number of shortcomings, and

that is their unfailing cheerfulness and sense of the ridiculous; having this characteristic, they respond readily to friendliness and good-humour.

The Bantu are very anxious to improve their social status, and are convinced that a knowledge of the English language is the hallmark of culture. There is, in addition, a strong economic urge to acquire English for business dealings and in order to obtain commercial and other employment; few Europeans speak any Native languages. The Africans' preference for English over Afrikaans is not, however, purely an economic matter. In spite of its growing economic value, Afrikaans is regarded by the Bantu as decidedly inferior to English, and a man or woman who acquires even a stilted, Babu English achieves respect in the eyes of his compatriots. This is possibly due to a subconscious association of Afrikaans with the Boers who first conquered the Natives and were, in turn, conquered by the British.

#### 9. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

The administration of Native locations is in the hands of the European Town Council, or local authority, subject to the approval of the Union Minister of Native Affairs. The Council appoints a Superintendent and an administrative staff, and runs the location as it would any other department of local affairs. There is, however, this important difference: a separate revenue and expenditure account must be kept for the Native Affairs Department, and no money raised in the location by way of taxes may be spent for the benefit of the European township. The Council is, ultimately, responsible for the finance of the location; deficits must be met by the European ratepayers, and loans must be raised on the security of the Council. On paper this all sounds very well. The Europeans are the trustees for the Natives. In practice, however, it is a most effective way of making the poor pay for social services and ensuring that they receive no direct benefit from the money of the European ratepayers. On the contrary, by charging disproportionately high rates for sanitary and lighting services against the Native Revenue Account, most municipalities manage to make the Natives contribute something towards the town revenue. Being responsible for deficits in the location means, in practice, cutting all services to the bone and increasing location taxation so as to ensure the absence of a deficit; being responsible for loans to the location means, in practice, giving investors sound security against possible losses. In other words, most locations are economically disguised slum properties which serve the double purpose of subsidising low wages and securing a rate of interest to investors.

Although there are almost as many Bantu inhabitants of towns as there are Europeans, the following table serves to measure the difference between the European township and the adjacent location.



TABLE XIV.

*Revenue and Expenditure of all Local Authorities (1935-36).*

Total revenue	£16,028,525	Total expenditure	£14,992,624
Revenue from Locations	471,421	Expenditure on Locations	380,372

It will be obvious from these figures that the locations are very much the poor relations of the European townships. The figures do not, however, reveal the full extent to which the locations are made to serve the interests of the towns. No official statistics are able to show exactly how much of the revenue under such headings as licences, cemeteries, markets, tramways, and buses comes from Native sources, nor how much "other revenue"—an amount almost twice that under the heading "Locations"—must be credited to the Natives. To place them all under European revenue is obviously incorrect. On the other hand, Natives who use the services of good streets, transport, and lighting in the European town enjoy those services without making any direct contribution; to balance this it should of course be realised that the cheap labour of the African helps materially to create the wealth of the town. Taking all these factors into consideration, it seems probable that the urban Natives contribute about £2,000,000 towards the total municipal revenue in the Union, and that about £1,750,000 is spent directly on Native locations. In other words, Natives contribute just over 12% of local revenue, and just under 12% of all expenditure is on Native locations. The Natives more than pay for all the services they receive in their locations, and so the real object of the locations is achieved. When we compare the standard of the services provided for Natives with those which the inhabitants of the European towns enjoy, we come to the conclusion that not only is the poorest section of the South African urban population paying, proportionately, the highest rates, but it receives the least return for its money.

Town Councils legislate for locations by means of by-laws and regulations, all of which are subject to the approval of a higher authority. The Urban Areas Act (1923), amended in 1930, and again by the Native Laws Amendment Act (1937), prescribes the duties of local authorities regarding locations and empowers them to control housing, make curfew regulations, control the entry of Natives into, and their removal from, urban areas, control the production and sale of kaffir beer, provide for the registration of service contracts, and levy taxes on the inhabitants of the locations. Provision is also made for the establishment of Native Advisory Boards, either by nomination or by election, and where a Board has been instituted all proposed regulations must be laid before it for advice; as a rule the Superintendent of the location is chairman of the Board, and in the best-governed locations local authorities place a high value on consultation with the Native members of the Advisory Board.

In the Union, with the exception of the Cape Province, all Native males are required to carry a pass, though about 6,000 Natives have been exempted on grounds of education or of their profession. In the urban areas these pass laws are reinforced by local regulations requiring Natives to be out of the European areas between the hours of 10 p.m. and 4 a.m., unless in possession of a special night pass given by the employer or by a police official. Native women are not subject to the ordinary pass laws, but they are, in many towns, subject to curfew regulations. Any police official, European or African, may stop a Native to ask for his pass, and failure to produce it on demand usually leads to immediate arrest. Even exempted Natives, unless they are well known locally, may be stopped to show their exemption certificate. With the large floating population of big urban centres some form of registration certificate is necessary, if only for the purpose of identification; but the pass regulations now in force constitute an irritating hardship, and do not really serve their purpose. Incidentally, Europeans may not enter the locations without a permit from the Superintendent or from the police; as conditions are now this is probably a wise precaution.

A local authority has power to prohibit the entry of Natives from other parts into the area under its control. Any Native who wishes to enter a proclaimed urban area must apply to the Superintendent for permission to do so; he may then obtain a pass to visit friends or to seek for work. The permit to seek for work in the town is valid for about a week, after which, unless permission is renewed, he must leave the area; if he fails to do this he is liable to arrest. Each local authority is compelled by law to take a biennial census of the Natives in its area, and "surplus" Natives—that is, those presumed to be over and above the labour requirements of the town—may then be compulsorily removed at Government expense to land provided by the South African Native Trust. These restrictive powers were granted by Parliament at the instigation of farmers, who found their labourers leaving for the towns, and of the larger local authorities, who found it difficult to cope with the growing urban Native population. Since, however, employers in towns much prefer a surplus population, so as to keep down wages, and since local authorities are likely to evoke a storm in the locations by wholesale removals, the provisions of the Act are unlikely to be carried out strictly; the "idle and dissolute" Natives referred to in the Act are the only ones likely to suffer! The first biennial census taken under the Act has shown no surplus Native population in any urban area, and there have, consequently, been no removals; but most of the big towns restrict entry.

The sale of European intoxicating liquor to Natives is totally prohibited throughout the Union, and the brewing of kaffir beer is allowed either under what is called domestic brewing, when any householder is allowed to possess something like four gallons of beer at any given

moment, or under the municipal brewing system, where the local authority brews and sells beer, using the profits for the benefit of the location; some local authorities prohibit even kaffir beer. The Natives themselves prefer domestic brewing as being freer and because, they maintain, good kaffir beer cannot be brewed in bulk; but a large number of Europeans, and a minority of Natives, are in favour of the greater control and large profits afforded by municipal brewing.

No one who knows the effect of cheap drink on the Cape Coloured population can doubt the wisdom of its prohibition for Africans; but, as in America, prohibition is difficult to carry out, and the attempt to do so has led to two great evils, the illicit drink traffic, and the brewing of concoctions that contain ingredients such as boot polish, carbide, raw spirit, or anything else that will supply the necessary "kick" to kaffir beer. Especially on the Witwatersrand, the brewing of unwholesome strong drink has assumed alarming proportions, and the trade is mostly in the hands of Native women, who cheerfully pay the large fines involved because of the huge profits the trade brings. In the slums of Johannesburg these women have brought evasion of the police to a fine art, using concealed stills and underground passages, and their continued activity has serious effects on the morals, health, and pockets of mine-labourers and other Natives. In many cases Europeans are behind both the illicit drink traffic and the brewing of "skokiaan", as the concoctions are commonly called.

The maintenance of law and order in urban areas falls under the South African Police Force, and will be dealt with later; but the onerous nature of municipal regulations may be shown here by quoting the fact that, for an average year, there are about 150,000 convictions against Natives for the following offences: illegal possession of kaffir beer; contravention of location and municipal regulations and of the Urban Areas Act; and contravention of the pass laws. Since the fines imposed are too high for the average wage-earner, the large majority of these convictions involve imprisonment.

Before leaving the subject of the administration of urban locations a word of praise and of pity must be said for the Superintendents and their officials. They are between the devil and the sea. Their task is to administer areas that are poverty-stricken, and they are blamed by Europeans and Natives alike for doing too little, and by many Europeans for doing too much. They have to settle innumerable and interminable petty disputes among their Native subjects; they must encourage, on ludicrously inadequate funds, social activities such as child-welfare societies and Bantu clubs; they must maintain a reasonably satisfied Native population; they must act as a link between the European town and the Native town, and must dispel a mutual distrust between black and white. Theirs is not an enviable task, and it is greatly to their credit that they perform it with patience and goodwill, and that,

with the means at their disposal, they produce some astonishingly good results.

#### 10. WHY LOCATIONS?

As regards its urban areas, the Union has definitely set out upon the road of separate areas for the different racial groups. With the Coloured population not much has been done except in the northern provinces; Asiatics are now, once more, being threatened with separate areas; but with regard to the Bantu the general principle has long been accepted, and, in practice, more than half the distance towards separate residential areas has been covered.

The present differences in customs, habits, outlook, moral standards, and social condition, between Europeans and Africans, are not due to economic inequality only; and these differences make residential segregation a sound policy for the present. It is not the principle that is wrong; what is wrong is the attitude of Europeans towards the locations, and the fact that segregation provides an admirably easy way by which the relatively wealthy can escape their responsibilities. Locations have been established in South Africa because Europeans required Native labour in the towns and were not prepared to pay the price. Had the Europeans said, in effect: "We require Native labour in our towns; but, for various very sound reasons, it is inadvisable that Europeans and Natives should live close together; therefore we shall establish separate residential areas and accept full responsibility for both townships, letting white and black share as citizens of one common urban area"—had the Europeans spoken thus, little exception could be taken to segregation. What they did say was: "We require cheap Native Labour in our towns; but we see no reason why we should pay higher rates for the benefit of the Natives; therefore, we shall establish separate townships and make them pay for themselves; what is more, we shall ask Parliament to legislate to this effect so that everything that is done can be done legally." In this way the European urban population has achieved a plentiful supply of cheap labour at no expense or inconvenience to itself; as an incidental convenience it has brought to its doors a large body of consumers; it has also been able to remove its worst and most unsightly slums out of smell and out of sight. The Native Economic Commission states that "Ndabeni (the largest location in Cape Town) was established by the Cape Government in 1902, for the prevention of the spread of plague". Precisely. But, plague or no plague—and the locations are riddled with disease—the cheap labour supply must continue; and what is the use of saving on your wages bill if you have to pay higher rates to provide better housing for the workers whose wages are too low to afford it for themselves? Therefore: segregate them and make them pay for themselves.

The feelings of most Europeans about locations are reflected in the

pages of a publication known as the *South African Municipal Year Book*, a book which the innocent might pick up thinking to obtain accurate statistics of municipal life in South Africa. From the pages of description, in the latest number, of about 450 towns, one gathers that they are all "artistically laid out" with "beautiful gardens"; public libraries, magnificent new swimming-pools, great educational centres, golf-courses, every convenience, deservedly one of the most popular seaside resorts, visitors spend an unforgettable holiday there—these are the phrases that stand out from the pages of description. They are not modest, these towns, and one of them describes itself as "the most beautiful civic centre". After these self-portraits come pages of figures, as to the expenditure on electricity, libraries, streets, buses, town halls (spacious), and other sources of civic pride. What magnificent progress has been achieved by the citizens of South African towns! It is all revealed here. Such progress might almost be forgiven if it forgets the part played by the workers in producing all this magnificence. For that is what it does. Beneath the proud name of the town is given, as the first item of information, the population; this is expressed as so many Europeans and so many non-Europeans. Sometimes it is "Europeans" and "Natives, etc." Apart from that piece of information, four out of all the towns mention the location. Durban gives one page, Johannesburg half a page, Bloemfontein half a page, and Pretoria—the "most beautiful civic centre" with about 77,000 Europeans and about 51,000 "Natives, etc."—gives *three lines*. Two pages devoted to half the urban population! And the book is no stripling; it contains 542 pages, including all the advertisements for remedies for dog diseases, remedies for disinfecting stables (not locations), and the best kind of polish for oak floors.

It is because of this outlook, and because of the mean economic motives behind urban segregation, that locations are degraded and degrading, that they are filthy, insanitary places where overcrowding and under-feeding are habitual. Segregation has, in fact, turned out to be a particularly mean method of making the poorest pay for their own social services.

## CHAPTER VI

### MINES AND INDUSTRIES

#### I. PROFITS AND WAGES

**M**OST PEOPLE think that South African mineral production consists entirely of gold and diamonds; in doing so, they are about 90% right. The total value of mineral production in the territories now comprising the Union, up till 1937, was about £2,000,000,000, of which diamonds accounted for about 16% and gold 74%, together just over 90%. In

1937, as an example, total mineral production was about £62,000,000, of which diamonds accounted for just over 5% and gold for about 80%, together about 85%. It should be noted, too, that these figures are based on the standard value of gold; if the present enhanced price of gold were used, that mineral would form an even larger part of total production.

Of the remaining mineral production, coal is the only item to be reckoned in millions. From the point of view, therefore, of production and labour, we are justified in drawing our conclusions chiefly from gold and diamonds.

Using figures published by Prof. Frankel, the position of gold from 1868 till 1932 may be expressed as in the following table:

TABLE XV.

*Investment in, Value of, and Dividends from, Gold (1868-1932).*

Investments from abroad . . . . .	£148,000,000
Investments from South Africa . . . . .	93,000,000
<b>Total investments . . . . .</b>	<b>£241,000,000</b>
Value of gold extracted . . . . .	£1,145,000,000
Dividends paid abroad (chiefly in Great Britain) . . . . .	190,000,000
Dividends paid in South Africa . . . . .	55,000,000
<b>Total dividends . . . . .</b>	<b>£245,000,000</b>

N.B.—Of the £190,000,000 paid in dividends abroad possibly £120,000,000 were re-invested in South Africa.

TABLE XVI.

*Investments, Dividends, and Wages in Gold-mining, 1937 (Witwatersrand Area Alone) (Round numbers).*

Capital invested from abroad . . . . .	£43,000,000
Capital invested from the Union . . . . .	28,000,000
<b>Total capital invested . . . . .</b>	<b>£71,000,000</b>
Dividends paid out . . . . .	£15,000,000
Rate of dividend on all capital . . . . .	21%
Rate of dividend on issued capital only . . . . .	28%
Annual wages and salaries paid . . . . .	£27,000,000
Annual wages paid to 36,000 European workers . . . . .	£14,000,000
Annual average wage per European head . . . . .	£390
Annual wages paid to 280,000 non-Europeans (chiefly Bantu) . . . . .	£13,000,000
Annual average wage per non-European . . . . .	£47

N.B.—The figure of £47, shown in the last line of Table XVI, includes a cash valuation of housing and food. The cash wage of the Native worker is about £35 and the value of food and housing about £12. From the cash wage must be deducted anything from 2s. to 6s. a month, as this represent advances made to labourers to enable them to reach the mines (see paragraph 2 of this chapter).

Unfortunately no figures are available for wages paid during the whole of the period reviewed in Table XV, but Table XVI gives some idea of the present situation.

Figures similar to the above might be quoted for each separate industry, whether mineral or otherwise; but the differences that exist between one industry and another are not sufficiently great to invalidate the general statement that high dividends are directly dependent on low-paid African labour. Two further deductions are obvious from the figures: the Native receives a very small share, both absolutely and relatively to the European worker, of the product of his labour; and, as we shall see presently, the Native wage is insufficient for even a poor standard of living.

The relation between European and non-European wages requires further illustration, as in the following tables.

TABLE XVII.

*Salaries and Wages on Mines and Allied Concerns in the Union (1937).*

Europeans employed . . . . .	50,211
Total annual wages for Europeans . . . . .	£18,511,486
Average wage per European (approx.) . . . . .	£369
Non-Europeans employed . . . . .	402,888
Total annual wages for non-Europeans . . . . .	£12,999,368
Average wage per non-European (approx.) . . . . .	£33

N.B.—Since Coloured and Asiatic wages are included in the term “non-European”, and since they are higher than Bantu wages, the average wage for the latter is about £31 per year. To the figure of £31 must be added the annual value of housing and food, estimated at about £12.

The following table shows that in industries other than mining and allied concerns much the same state of affairs prevails.

TABLE XVIII.

*Salaries and Wages in Privately Owned Factories (1936–1937).*

Europeans employed . . . . .	140,203
Total annual wages for Europeans . . . . .	£25,260,036
Average wage per European (approx.) . . . . .	£242
Non-Europeans employed . . . . .	192,565
Total annual wages for non-Europeans . . . . .	£9,342,754
Average wage per non-European (approx.) . . . . .	£48

N.B.—In this case the item in the last line, £48, includes the value of food and housing in industrial compounds; where these are not provided by the employer the cash wage is correspondingly increased.

During the year reviewed in Table XVIII (1936–1937) gross output of privately owned industries increased by 16% to £172,936,000; numbers employed increased by about 9%, and the amount paid in wages to all workers increased by 13%.

The whole attitude of Europeans in South Africa towards Native wages is well illustrated by the following advertisement that appeared in the Press :

“The South Africa sugar industry is a national asset. It employs 55,000 workers at an annual wage bill of £1,500,000 and puts into circulation hundreds of thousands of pounds in buying South African products, thus benefiting the entire nation.”

Now, on analysis, this gives the average annual wage paid by the sugar industry as about £27; but in this calculation the Europeans employed by the industry have been included, so that the average wage of the 52,000 or so Natives employed will be considerably less than £27. Although the producers do not say so, the “hundreds of thousands of pounds” spent “in buying South African products” probably refers to the maize meal bought as food for the sugar workers; estimating this generously at £3 per head per year, we can state that, at an outside limit, the total wage in cash and kind of the Native workers cannot be more than £33 per year. The 52,000 Native workers, then, should certainly be subtracted from the “entire nation” when estimating the benefits of the sugar industry to South Africa. But, to push the matter further, there are other people in South Africa whose benefit from the sugar industry is by no means obvious. Sugar enjoys a large measure of protection, and the Union consumer pays more for sugar than the Londoner does; a large percentage of the population of South Africa is not able to afford this luxury. We are, indeed, forced to the conclusion that the owners of the South African sugar industry have fallen into the common error of confusing their own interests with those of “the entire nation”. Moreover, the Natives of Natal, the sugar area, have apparently arrived at a similar conclusion, if we may judge from the *Official Year Book* of the Union, which says: “It has been found impossible to obtain an adequate regular supply (of Native labourers) locally and arrangements have therefore been made for recruiting (for the sugar industry) in Native areas outside Natal”.

The fact that a comparatively large and well-organised industry thinks it worth while to appeal for public support on the grounds that it pays its workers an average wage of about 2s. a day, indicates how universally it is accepted in South Africa that the profits of industry depend on low-paid Native labour.

A reference to Table XIII will show that, apart from mining and industrial undertakings (items 6 and 7), there are two other considerable employers of Native labour; these are the Government, Provincial or Union, and the municipalities (items 9 and 10). The wages paid to non-Europeans in these two categories vary considerably, and probably the simplest way of expressing the wage-rates is as follows: in Cape Town industrial wages are higher than on the Government railways, while



Natives in municipal or provincial employment receive better wages than those in Government employment; in Kimberley industrial wages are lower than on the railways; in Bloemfontein the Provincial Council pays less than the railways, and wages in industry and commerce are higher than on the railways; in Johannesburg the municipality, the gold-mines, the brickmakers, and the provincial authorities all pay less for Native labour than do the railways, while builders, garage proprietors, laundry owners, and furniture manufacturers all pay more.

Taking all the foregoing scattered figures into account, we can express the situation in mining and industrial employment simply by saying that the average wage for Native workers is between £3 and £4 a month, these figures *including* the estimated value of wages in kind—namely, food and housing. Another, and equally simple, way of saying it is that anyone who has about £200 invested in gold shares of the right kind receives a bit more by way of annual dividend than one Native working in the mine receives as an annual wage.

## 2. NATIVE LABOUR SUPPLY

The supply of Native labour for South African mines and industries comes from a very wide area. For the mines most of the labour is recruited; for industries it is largely voluntary, except for the Natal sugar industry, where almost half the labour is recruited. The recruitment of Native labour in the Union itself is governed by the Native Labour Regulations Act of 1911, which defines recruiting areas (alterable by regulation), and empowers the Director of Native Labour at Johannesburg to issue licences to recruiting agents. Outside the Union recruitment is a matter of arrangement with the country concerned, and these arrangements are made by the Union Government for the mines. An example of this is the Union-Moçambique Convention, by which the number of Natives to be recruited from Portuguese territory is limited to 90,000, a figure that may be altered by mutual agreement; the Convention also stipulates the length of the service contract and lays it down that the payment of part of the wage shall be deferred until the worker reaches his home. Tropical Natives, from British and other tropical areas, were formerly much used; but the death-rate among them on the Rand was so high that their recruitment was stopped by law. When South Africa went off the gold standard, however, and the price of gold soared, it became profitable to work the low-grade mines, and the demand for Native labour increased. The Chamber of Mines thereupon persuaded the Government that medical research was now able to cope with the diseases to which tropical Natives were so prone, and the ban was lifted. In 1937 the deaths from diseases among tropical Natives on the gold-mines was still 17·49 per 1,000, as against 4·86 per 1,000 among Union Natives; since then this rate has been reduced.

For the gold- and coal-mines of the Transvaal two agencies recruit

Native labour from all over Southern Africa. The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association deals with Portuguese territory and areas north of that, while the Native Recruiting Corporation obtains labourers in the Union and in British territories south of 22 degrees south latitude. Between them these two corporations employ about 600 European and about 1,200 Native officials and agents, and they handle the bulk of the labour supply for the mines. The following table will show how wide the recruiting net is cast.

TABLE XIX.

*Territorial Origin of all Native Labour Employed in Labour Districts (that is, Industrial and Mining Areas) 1937.*

Area.	No. employed in labour districts (on December 31, 1937).	No. employed in mines only (on December 31, 1937).
<i>Union of South Africa—</i>		
Cape Province . . . .	134,669	111,858
Natal and Zululand . . . .	62,468	21,230
Transvaal . . . . .	130,358	25,840
Free State . . . . .	24,957	4,382
Total for Union . . . .	352,452	163,310
<i>Non-Union Areas—</i>		
Basutoland (British) . . . .	53,273	43,430
Bechuanaland (British) . . . .	12,642	8,972
Swaziland (British) . . . .	8,326	7,125
Other areas, chiefly British . . . .	25,402	11,333
Portuguese . . . . .	93,143	92,256
Total of Non-Union . . . .	192,786	163,116
Grand total . . . . .	545,238	326,426

N.B.—The figures used here are those of the latest Union census (1936); more recent figures for mining employees have been discarded in the interests of uniformity, but they do not substantially alter the situation here shown. If anything, the more recent figures show that the dependence of the Union on extra-Union Native labour is increasing.

An analysis of the figures in Table XIX reveals that about 35% of the Native labour employed in labour districts in the Union comes from territories over which the Union has no direct political control; about 50% of the Native labour employed on the mines comes from similar territories. The interest of Great Britain in the mines and industries of the Union is, therefore, not confined to dividends drawn by British investors; and the continued stressing by Union politicians of the urgent need for a common Native policy for Southern Africa becomes more understandable in the light of these figures. The reduction of Native

taxation in Nyasaland, for example, is a matter of considerable interest to the mining houses in Johannesburg, and, thence, to the Parliaments of the Union and of Great Britain. If the Native is not taxed, how can mining dividends be paid? The Witwatersrand is, in fact, the capital of an economic empire whose legislative capitals are in Cape Town, London, Salisbury, and Lisbon; and legislation follows the dictates of economics.

The recruiting agencies that supply such a large proportion of the labour needed on South African mines work on something like the following lines. A small proportion of the Natives find their way to the mines by themselves, and contract their labour for anything from 1 to 6 months. A larger proportion enlist with one of the two big agencies under what is called the Assisted Voluntary Scheme, by which they present themselves for medical examination in the area in which they live; if they are fit, they are given an advance of £2 plus railfare to Johannesburg. These two classes rank as voluntary labour, and may choose the mine on which they want to work. The largest proportion of workers are actively recruited in various ways; in the Transkei, from which most Union labour comes, European traders are recruiting agents, and frequently encourage eligible Natives to contract debts which will have to be worked off on the mines; Native touts are employed to paint glowing pictures of life in Johannesburg; young men are lured away without their parents' consent. Similar methods are employed in other areas. An agent receives between £1 10s. and £2 2s. for each recruit forwarded, and there is, therefore, a strong incentive for the trader to encourage debt. It has been noted, in paragraph 1, that the advance of £2 plus railfare is deducted from the wage of the miner; it will also be seen from Table XIX that the vast majority of mine-workers come from areas far distant from the Rand. The net result of this is a reduction in wages of between 1d. and 3d. per day from labourers whose wage is about 2s. per day.<sup>1</sup>

The agreement signed by the Natives who pass through a recruiting office (a trader's store, for example) is a large and closely printed document. To someone who understands legal phraseology the conditions of the agreement regarding wages, shifts, nature of work, accident, disease, length of contract, and the cessation of work due to "an act of God" for which the employers cannot be held responsible, are all reasonably intelligible. Since only a small percentage of the prospective miners are literate, and since a still smaller percentage understand contractual terms, it is doubtful whether any of the Natives really know to what the document binds them. However, Natives are accustomed to obey the commands of the white man, so that whether or not they know beforehand what they are in for does not much affect their subsequent behaviour. Also, Natives have been going to the mines for generations

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written the gold mines have decided to pay railfare for the forward journey.

now, and by this time the general terms of the agreement have been passed on by the returning miners. At the same time, Natives going to the mines for the first time are undoubtedly disillusioned about the nature of the life and work of, and the glittering wages attached to, mining. Some 6,000 desert from the gold-mines every year, and about 3,000 are recaptured and suitably punished for breaking contract.

The average term for a Native on the mines is about eleven months, after which he will make the long journey home for a spell; a great many of those who have once been, return to the mines, and, if they come back within six months, they are paid a small bonus. On the whole, however, neither the employers nor the Natives themselves regard Native miners as being permanently employed in mining. The mining population is a constantly shifting one, and the contact between the mines and the Reserves or the extra-Union territories is continuous. The actual demands of the mines vary from month to month, with development of new mines and with the price of gold; the supply of labour varies largely with the state of poverty of the Natives and, usually, the peak months of supply are January and February, the "hunger months" in the Reserves. It is then that the customary number of five or six Native labour trains that reach Johannesburg each week is increased to ten or eleven.

The continued growth of mining in the Union calls for more and more labour. On November 15, 1938, the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs was questioned in the House of Commons regarding the hiring out of convict labour to the mines, and he was unable to say how many Natives from British areas, who had been convicted of crime in the Union, were hired out as labour. General Smuts, then Minister of Justice, was questioned in the Union Parliament on the same point, and said that he did not defend convict labour, but it would be "awkward" to abolish it. The difficulty was that there was a shortage of farm labour, which would be made more acute by the abolition of convict labour. "I think it is a wrong system," said General Smuts, "and at various times I have tried to get rid of it, but I am up against a very difficult economic problem with regard to farm labour." During the debate on the subject in the Union Parliament it was stated that a Rand mine had a regular supply of seventy convicts at 1s. 6d. per day. It is difficult to say what exactly this means; but in 1937 the mines spent close on £22,000 on convict labour, and, at 1s. 6d. per day, that means an average of about 290 convicts per working day. It is needless to remark that the Forced Labour Convention has not been ratified by the Union of South Africa.

### 3. CONDITION OF LABOUR IN MINES AND INDUSTRIES

Books have been written to describe the well-nigh indescribable violence of the break between the calm of tribal life and the shattering

nature of the first contact with industrialism, and particularly with mining industry. Where is the scale by which we may measure the psychological shocks experienced, and the complexes set up, when an unsophisticated tribesman from the primitive surroundings of his Native home is brought suddenly into a world of nerve-tearing machinery, of shaft-lifts that rush him down to the bowels of the earth, of shouted commands, of incessant noise, and of time reckoned by man-made clocks? In due course custom softens the worst effects on the mind of the African, but we may imagine his intense longing for the sound of lowing cattle when his ears are continuously assaulted by the grinding and screaming of mining operations.

The kind of work performed in mining by unskilled Native labour is largely with pick and shovel, but a small number are employed in drilling, drill-sharpening, and machine and hammer work. As we shall see in a later chapter, Natives are debarred by law from performing certain skilled operations, and are thus effectively prevented from rising above a very low scale of pay, whatever skill they may acquire. They work in gangs under a European "boss" and have an eight-hour day or forty-eight-hour week.

Before a recruit finally becomes a number attached to a mine he undergoes three strict medical examinations which only the fittest survive. Something like 25% of those who apply in the Reserves are rejected on medical grounds, and, since only the reasonably fit would in any case apply, this is a startling commentary on the malnutrition and poverty of the Natives in the Reserves. Those who are accepted are kept on light work above ground for some weeks before being put to the really hard work. We may assume, then, that once a Native has been accepted by the mines he must be of strong physique and in good condition. Yet the death-rate from disease among Natives engaged in mining is such that, in 1937, 2,757 of them died of diseases contracted at the mines; another 818 lost their lives through mining accidents. In other words, 3,575 physically fit Natives lost their lives in 1937, a normal year, in helping to produce the mineral wealth of South Africa.

For permanent partial disablement on the mines a Native may be paid from £1 to £20; for permanent total disablement or for a death a lump sum of between £30 and £50 is paid; compensation for phthisis is on about the same scale as for total disablement or death. It should be noted that, though the Chamber of Mines in its official reports is always quick to point out that in reckoning the Native's wage, housing, food, and other services should not be neglected, the scales for compensation are calculated *on the cash wage only*. The lump-sum payments, instead of a disability pension, constitute a serious hardship on the Natives, who find it difficult to obtain employment once they have been injured on the mines. There is evidence, too, that, through ignorance of the law, Natives do not always receive the full compensation to which they are

entitled. Compensation for European miners is calculated on about six times the scale used for Natives.

All excepting an insignificant minority of Native miners are housed in compounds each containing from 1,000 to 5,000 Natives. On the Witwatersrand there are about sixty of these barracks with their tiers of cement bunks and high brick walls. Considered as barracks, they are not badly run, and Native workers on the mines are better off in this respect than many Natives who live in towns. The food supplied represents a balanced diet, and, incidentally, the mines provide a market for low-grade meat. Food and housing are better than most Natives in the Reserves enjoy, and those workers who manage to escape death by accident or disease, or are not injured, return home in better trim than when they arrived.

Social amusements, such as athletic sports and cinemas, are provided on the mines, and Mission Societies are encouraged financially and otherwise to provide welfare facilities. Mine hospitals are well-run, and the mining houses spend large sums on research for the benefit of themselves and their employees.

In general, the treatment of the Native miners in the compounds is not harsh, as such things go in South Africa. It is when we consider the compounds from the economic point of view that they appear in their true colours as a cheap method for the ruthless exploitation of labour. Land on the Witwatersrand has been made far too valuable by Native labour to allow it to be used for the creation of decent Native villages where miners may bring their wives and families. So they are herded in barracks, segregated from their families, a prey to unnatural vices, and spending their spare time and cash in gambling or at one of the many illicit liquor houses with which Johannesburg abounds. What is not spent there may be spent at the mining Concession Stores, placed conveniently outside the compounds, so that the employers may receive back as profit some of the wage paid to their African workers. On about 85% of the coal-mines in Natal there exists the token system, under which Natives pledge their wages in advance to a concessionary storekeeper, who is present on pay-day to collect his debts, the money being handed direct to him by the mine paymaster. A report presented to Parliament on this system, in February 1939, stated: "Easy credit literally thrust upon him, plenty of beer at the beer-hall kept by the mine storekeeper, and the lure of loose women who frequent the beer-halls, tempt the Native to plunge deeper and deeper into debt until he becomes economically chained to the mine." The Union Government has expressed its intention of abolishing the token system.<sup>1</sup>

The gold mines encourage a system of deferred pay, and the Portuguese Government insists on it for the Natives from its territories. This system

<sup>1</sup> This has now been done, though the mine storekeepers still retain their valuable licences to sell liquor.

does certainly secure that a portion at least of the hard-earned cash reaches home to tide the family over until the breadwinner is once more forced by debt and want to go for a spell to the mines. Even with deferred pay a considerable proportion of the Native miner's wage finds its way back into the pockets of his employers. Taking the mining industry as a whole there can be little doubt that this particular empire is based on the debt of the Native workers; it is debt that drives them to seek work on the mines, and it is debt that keeps them there or brings them back.

It is worth while to compare the mining compounds with the mining villages that the Belgian Government has developed in the Congo, and, to a lesser extent, with the mining villages of the Northern Rhodesia Copper Belt. In the Belgian Congo a definite policy of creating a class of permanent mine labourer is being followed, and not only are families encouraged on the mines, but provision is made on a reasonable scale for ante-natal clinics, child welfare, and education. Cottage gardens are encouraged, and the mines buy surplus vegetables from their employees. Twenty years ago the Belgian authorities abolished the type of sleeping quarters now looked upon as modern on the Rand. Of course, the numbers involved in Northern Rhodesia and the Congo Belge are much smaller than on the Rand; above all, land is still fairly plentiful.

Law and order are maintained in mining compounds by the Department of Native Affairs, an indication that the African miner is not considered as a permanent urbanite, but rather as a tribesman temporarily in barracks. A Director of Native Labour, with headquarters at Johannesburg, is in charge of Native labourers on the mines. Native Commissioners and Inspectors pay periodic visits to the mines and try petty cases such as infringements of mining regulations, disobedience to orders, desertion, drunkenness, and assaults; fines may be deducted from wages. The Director also controls the issue of recruiting licences, the housing of labourers, assessment of damages and compensation, and kindred matters.

Detailed consideration of the conditions prevailing in industries other than mining do not add much to the picture here given of African industrial labour. Industrial compounds are no better, and often far worse, than mining compounds; food is probably worse than on the mines; hours and days of work are about the same as on the mines; and we saw that industrial wages were, on the whole, better than mining wages. There is one important difference, which is that, while the Native miner is temporary, the industrial worker is tending to become a permanent town-dweller. Although the figures quoted in Table XIII show a large preponderance of male over female in industrial areas, a comparison with previous years shows that the female population is growing more rapidly than the male, and that a permanent proletariat is developing in the labour districts. This will undoubtedly give Native

workers a better bargaining position, since it is useless to expect anything in the nature of a sustained trade union effort from the unstable and heterogeneous Native mining population.

It has already been pointed out that housing in the large locations is hopelessly inadequate; in the labour districts, where there are many industrial workers who are not housed in compounds, the conditions of overcrowding are worse than elsewhere.

The effects of the temporary removal of so much man-power from the British Protectorates will be dealt with later. At this stage it should be remarked that the Natives who go to the mines, disturbing though their experiences may be, are probably not so thoroughly divorced from tribal life as are those more permanent industrial workers who are painfully adapting themselves to European ways of life in the urban areas. The effect on the miner of contact with Western civilisation is violent and demoralising, and he often returns to his tribal home without his natural dignity and simplicity, but with disease and a veneer of Western civilisation. The effect on the permanent industrial worker is in many ways more devastating; he has lost for good his contact with the old way of living, and has little moral or cultural hold on life. Though he may receive better wages than the miner from the Reserves or the territories, his economic position is, in reality, less secure than that of those Africans who are able to return to tribal lands.

#### 4. EUROPEAN WORKERS—THE “ARISTOCRATS”

We have seen that the wages of European skilled labourers are about six or seven times those of Native workers. This ratio may be remarked in all the other items connected with labour conditions. The housing and general standard of living of the European industrial or mine worker are what is known as those of “civilised” labour. (Africans are not alone in being puzzled by the implications of this term.) The same differences may be observed in the ranks of the black-coated workers; in South Africa it is not so much a matter of the colour of the coat as of the skin. In the civil service and in education, Bantu men and women who are trained to the same degree as Europeans receive much smaller pay, though the ratio is less than in the industries. The position of the European worker, too, is usually protected by law and by the Trade Unions, matters which will be dealt with subsequently.

There is a large class of semi-skilled and unskilled European worker whose position in the labour market would be hopeless were it not for Government intervention in subsidising their wages. As it is about 300,000 poor whites, unable to compete with non-European labour, live below the poverty line under conditions of housing, feeding, and clothing that are as bad as in any European country.

The “aristocrat” of labour in South Africa is, then, the skilled European worker who receives good wages, has a high standard of living, and



is well-protected. Almost all the rest, black and white, receive less than a living wage.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters we have dealt with the various classes of labour in South Africa, and it may be well, before passing to other conditions, to sum up some of the outstanding characteristics so far noted.

The Reserves of the Union, the British territories in Southern Africa, and Portuguese territory, form a gigantic reservoir of Native labour for South Africa; industries, and the gold-mining industry in particular, are dependent on this labour supply from territories over which South Africa has no direct political control.

By possessing this reservoir of Native labour, European mining, industry, and agriculture are able to maintain a low-wage policy for Africans; wage-rates in the Union are low because large reserves of foreign labour are available.

The wide gap between European and non-European wages is indicative of a similar gap between the shares of the national income that the Europeans and the non-Europeans receive. European labourers are, therefore, under an economic inducement to keep their own wages high by keeping Native wages low. The European skilled worker sees his interest as bound up with that of the employing class in the common object of exploiting black labour; allowing for differences in social and economic conditions between labour in Europe and labour in South Africa, the European skilled worker in South Africa is opportunist in the Marxian sense of the word.

Unskilled wages for Europeans, and Coloured and Asiatic wages, are under a constant downward pressure from Native labour; except on the farms, Native wages are under a similar pressure from African workers from the Reserves and elsewhere. In these circumstances European skilled labour has sought safety by entrenching itself against Native labour.

Practically all Native wages, from the farms to the mines, are paid partly in cash and partly in kind. In other words, the European community in the Union uses a variation of the truck system on a national scale.

The vast bulk of the workers in South Africa live under conditions of overcrowding, underfeeding, and the lack of essentials for even a low standard of living; they are, in fact, exploited to about the same degree as British labour was in the early days of the Industrial Revolution.

## CHAPTER VII

### GOVERNMENT

#### I. CENTRAL LEGISLATURE

TO UNDERSTAND fully the economic and social structure of the Union some knowledge of the legislative and administrative machinery is required.

The Statute of Westminster of 1931 put on paper what had been the practice since 1909, when the British Parliament passed the South Africa Act: the Union Parliament is the supreme and only sovereign legislative power in South Africa. This statement may annoy constitutional lawyers who love to argue about the status of the Union; but, while such arguments undoubtedly have a high pleasure-value in the academic sense, they need not detain us when entering the realm of practical politics. There is one situation that does not fit comfortably into the conception of a sovereign parliament in South Africa, and that is the triangular relationship between Great Britain, her South African Protectorates, and the Union of South Africa. This will be discussed in due course.

To-day, as in 1910, the Union Parliament is the supreme legislative authority in the Union. It consists of two houses: a Senate of forty-four members who must be at least thirty years of age and must own unencumbered fixed property to the value of at least £500, and a House of Assembly consisting of 153 members. Both Senators and M.P.s must be of European descent, must be British subjects, and registered voters. The forty-four members of the Senate are elected as follows: an electoral college, consisting of the M.P.s and the Members of the Provincial Council of each of the four provinces, elects eight Senators to represent each province; the Governor-General-in-Council nominates eight more, of whom four are "selected mainly on the grounds of their thorough acquaintance with the reasonable wants and wishes of the Coloured races in South Africa". (The most recent appointment under this latter clause was that of Senator Fourie—1938—whose qualifications were so flagrantly at odds with the spirit of the clause that two ministers resigned in protest.) The remaining four Senators are indirectly elected by the Natives of South Africa in the following manner: the country is divided into four electoral areas, two in the Cape, one in Natal, and one for the Free State and Transvaal combined. The machinery of election is somewhat complicated, except in the Transkei, where the General Council, described earlier, elects one Senator. For the rest of the Cape, and in the two other divisions, votes are cast on behalf of the Native population by chiefs, advisory boards, Native councils, and Native advisory boards in urban locations; each of these constitutes an electoral unit and has as many votes as there are tax-paying Natives in the area; the vote is indivisible, which means that all the votes in an area go to the candidate

whom the majority favours. Thus, a Native advisory board with 10,000 taxpayers may vote as follows: seven for candidate A and five for B; all the 10,000 votes then go to A. Natives distributed on European farms may vote before the district magistrate for a Native elector who will cast a collective vote for them on the same principles. The first election under the Act providing for this form of Native representation took place in 1937, and clearly revealed the difficulties of the system. Candidates had to travel thousands of miles to visit the electoral units in constituencies the smallest of which is almost half the size of Great Britain, and the largest almost twice that of Great Britain; very few farm labourers knew about the election or were given the necessary leave to take part in it. In spite of all the drawbacks, however, four Senators with an unrivalled knowledge of Native affairs were elected.

The Senate has equal legislative powers with the Assembly, except in the matter of finance; but in a clash between the two Houses the Assembly is almost bound to win. Although many of the Senators are men with sound liberal views, on Native policy, for example, it is a conservative body with little real power.

The House of Assembly is constituted as follows: 150 members are elected according to population by registered voters in the four provinces. Throughout the Union there is universal European adult suffrage with the usual residential and other qualifications, but with no property or income qualification; in the Cape Province Coloured and Asiatic males who can write down their names, addresses, and occupations, and who either possess fixed property to the value of £75 or an income of £50 a year, may register as voters. There are about 25,000 Coloured and 1,500 Asiatic registered voters in the Cape Province, as against 390,000 Europeans. Natal contains similar provisions on paper, but they are framed in such a way that there are 341 Asiatic and Coloured voters, and one Native, as against 98,000 Europeans. In the Free State and Transvaal no non-European may be registered as a voter, though there are undoubtedly a few voters of mixed blood who pass for Europeans.

In addition to the 150 M.P.s, there are three who are elected by those adult male Natives in the Cape Province who have the qualifications mentioned previously for Coloured and Asiatic voters; these Bantu voters are registered on a separate electoral roll, and they elect their M.P.s (who must, of course, be Europeans) at a different time from that at which the remaining 150 M.P.s are elected. In their first election, in 1937, the Native voters of the Cape showed remarkable discrimination in choosing two men and one woman, all of whom have had wide experience and knowledge of Native affairs.

The position is thus that, in the highest legislature in the land, forty Senators represent the European population and four the Native populations, while in the Assembly 150 members represent the Europeans and a number of Asiatics and Coloureds, and three members represent the

Natives of the Cape Province. Out of a total of 197 members in Parliament, 190 represent 22% of the total population, and seven represent 68%; the remaining 10% are unrepresented. The 197 members are all Europeans, and, by law, no non-European is eligible for membership.

When we speak about Parliament being elected by and representing the population, it is important to discover what particular interests are represented. It has just been seen that the European, as contrasted with the non-European, population is predominantly represented in Parliament. The following table analyses the occupations of the present (1939) House of Assembly:

TABLE XX.

*Composition of the House of Assembly (1939).*

Farmers . . . . .	53
Legal . . . . .	34
Commerce and Industry . . . . .	13
Medical . . . . .	
Engineering . . . . .	
Religion . . . . .	
Ex-Civil Service . . . . .	
Ex-Journalists . . . . .	
Workers . . . . .	
Accountants . . . . .	
Building Contractors . . . . .	
Agents . . . . .	4
Directors . . . . .	3
Professional Politicians . . . . .	20
Total . . . . .	153

Of the legal group, eighteen represent commerce and industry, and twelve farming; four of the ministers of religion represent farming areas; two of the doctors represent farming, and three represent industrial areas; of the twenty classified as professional politicians, ten may be said to represent farming, and ten industries. The actual farming representation is, therefore, eighty-one, while industry and commerce are represented by forty-four members. If we divide the House of Assembly into the categories of, on the one hand, owners and employers, and, on the other, workers, we find that not more than eight members have real labour sympathies, and, of the eight, probably four are aware of the need to consider labour without reference to colour; possibly thirty to forty members could be regarded as liberal in their sympathies.

The state of political parties, whose opinions may more conveniently be dealt with later, gives a further indication of the economic complexion of the House of Assembly. It should be noted that the following table shows the state of political parties before September 1939. In that month the United Party was effectively split on the question of war with Germany, the majority following General Smuts in wishing to declare war.

and the minority agreeing with General Hertzog that the Union should remain neutral. This question will be dealt with in due course, but the point to make here is that, whether they follow General Hertzog, General Smuts, or Dr. Malan, the members who compose the three main parties in the Assembly have certain economic interests that are not fundamentally altered by a change in parties.

TABLE XXI.

*State of Political Parties (August, 1939).*

United Party (farming, industry, and commerce) . . . . .	110
Nationalist Party (chiefly farming) . . . . .	28
Dominion Party (chiefly industry and commerce) . . . . .	8
Labour Party . . . . .	3
Socialist . . . . .	1
Representing Native voters in the Cape Province (chiefly labour) . . . . .	3
Total . . . . .	153

The composition of Parliament as revealed in Tables XX and XXI explains why it is easy to obtain legislative benefits for the farmers but almost impossible to get Parliament to improve the lot of the farm labourer; why there is so much legislative solicitude for mines, industries, and commerce; why European labour is comparatively well cared for; and why the Native population is fobbed off with legislative bones. Except for the over-representation of agriculture, Parliament is, in fact, a fairly accurate mirror in which to look for the unequal distribution of the national wealth and income. Broadly speaking, the Nationalist Party represents capital in land, while the United Party stands for capital in both land and industry. Of the two, the United Party is more liberal in its tendencies, but the comparative ease with which the two leaders of the old Nationalist and South African Parties, Generals Hertzog and Smuts, persuaded the mass of their followers to join in a United Party in 1933, shows that there are no fundamental economic differences between the two groups.

The Union Cabinet consists of a Prime Minister and twelve members, and these thirteen are between them responsible to Parliament for sixteen departments. It is interesting to note that in the Cabinet as it was in August 1939, the Prime Minister and two other members of the Cabinet had been Generals during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902; Mr. Havenga, then Minister of Finance, took a leading part, and was wounded, in that war; and Colonel Reitz took a less important part in the same war. The split over the neutrality question resulted in the resignation of General Hertzog and Mr. Havenga, among others; but they are still active politicians, and possible future Cabinet Ministers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> General Hertzog has now retired from active politics.

It should be added that these Anglo-Boer War veterans are much less reactionary than the younger leaders of the Nationalist Party who took little, if any, part in the famous Boer struggle for independence in which they now claim proprietary rights.

## 2. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

The administrative machinery of the Union requires no detailed description; it consists of the customary heads of departments, officials, boards and commissioners, all controlled by, or controlling, as the case may be, the Minister in charge. South Africa is no exception to the rule that modern democracies tend to be bureaucratically governed by the permanent civil service; an occasional Minister is able to burst the bands of red tape that have been wound round his department, but the power of the civil service is too great for this to be a frequent occurrence. On the whole, the civil service has a fair record, and, in spite of red tape, administration is frequently more liberal than legislation. Thus, as an ex-Minister of Social Welfare, Mr. Hofmeyr, recently explained, the Blind Persons Act of 1936 contained a colour bar clause; but assistance was given administratively to Asiatics and Natives. Such a statement can, of course, be made by a Minister out of office only; and, as Mr. Hofmeyr further explained, administrative action of this kind requires a certain amount of parliamentary juggling so that it may be effectively screened from the over-curious M.P. Administrative expenditure of that kind must creep in unawares.

In 1937 there were about 37,000 European and 9,000 Native civil servants, or one official to every 200 inhabitants; and the total expenditure on salaries, wages, and allowances was over £10,000,000, or about 25% of the national expenditure from revenue or from loan account.

At the time of Union there were very few Afrikaners capable of filling the higher administrative posts, and, until the advent of the first Hertzog Ministry in 1924, most of these were occupied by English-speaking officials who in many cases did not know the second official language of the Union. General Hertzog's administration changed all that by a consistent policy of appointing bilingual Afrikaners wherever possible, and to-day the large majority of civil servants are bilingual, while the numbers of English- and Afrikaans-speaking officials are about equal.

South Africa is, politically speaking, a small country where "jobs for pals" is a policy difficult to avoid. The story is told of a certain Minister who gave a garden-party for the officials of his department in Pretoria; it turned out to be a reunion of men and women from the Minister's home town. All South African Governments, like most others, appoint and promote political supporters, and until recently strenuously denied doing so. The number of purely political appointments is not great, and the vast majority of civil servants are unaffected by a change of govern-

ment; entrance to the service is governed by competitive examination in the first instance, and thereafter a large number of promotions and appointments are controlled by the Civil Service Commission. Ministers have to make a number of appointments to hospital boards, college and university councils, land boards, and farmers' assistance boards, and it is in these that politics play a considerable part. In 1938 the United Party found that its policy was being sabotaged by members of these boards who belonged to the Nationalist Party, and General Hertzog, then Prime Minister, heartily agreed with the Party Congress resolution that in future such appointments should go to United Party members only; the Government went farther, and proceeded to dismiss board members who were Nationalists. The cream of the jest was that most of the dismissed men had been appointed by Dr. Malan when he was still a member of General Hertzog's Cabinet, in the old Nationalist days. As Minister of the Interior, Dr. Malan was responsible for many of the appointments, and he always put in staunch Nationalist members who could be relied upon to uphold Nationalist beliefs on all occasions and in all spheres. It was these men whom General Hertzog's Government began to evict in 1938, to a chorus of protests, from the Malanite Press, at this *uitskop-beleid* (kicking-out policy). Actually, of course, the policy is sound, because no Government can allow its policy to be sabotaged by its own administrative boards. When the political reshuffle took place in September, 1939, on the question of neutrality, General Smuts made big changes in the Defence Department, since he certainly could not take the risk of having his policy torpedoed by officials whom Mr. Pirow had promoted.

Political jobbery is not confined to the appointment of the higher ranks in the administrative staff. In the days after Union, lobbying for railway construction in his constituency was one of the principal uses of an M.P.; but for some years now no new railways of any importance have been built. The thing these days is irrigation works, which the country badly needs, but for which it pays such an extravagant capital price that the land below the dam cannot be let at an economic rent. In 1938, for example, Government announced that a new dam was to be built near Calitzdorp, and within a week land values had jumped from £20 a morgen to £150; the result was that when the dam came to be built by public money the farmers in that area received about £500,000 without having done anything more than elect a good M.P.

Another form of political jobbery is found in connection with what is known as the poor white vote. Some years ago the Nationalist Government used the poor white railway- and road-workers as a kind of mobile voting squad, and shifted them to strategic points in time to qualify residually as voters in that area. This particular form of jerrymandering seems to have fallen into disuse, but in the last general election, in 1938, and in subsequent by-elections, administrative pressure seems to have

been exerted on poor whites working on Government settlements and irrigation works.

There is one Government department—that of Native Affairs—which requires special mention. It has been pointed out in an earlier chapter that the Department of Native Affairs is a government within a government, because Parliament has delegated wide powers to it and it continuously encroaches on the other departments. Native Reserves, Native labour in mines and industries, Native agriculture are among the many aspects of African life that are controlled by the Department of Native Affairs; and the control is altogether separated from that exercised by other departments on European affairs. In 1939 a small hitch, which will probably be overcome in due course, prevented Native education from falling under the control of this omnibus department. An equivalent position would arise in England if a special department of State were established to deal with the housing, labour, wages, and education of people in Lancashire who were of Irish descent. Such a department would also be able to move groups of Irishmen from one area to another, and would be able to hold them collectively responsible for bomb outrages.

While the lives of all Bantu living in the Union are affected by the abnormal powers that the Department of Native Affairs wields, it is the 32% of the population living in Native Reserves that is most concerned. For the Natives in the Reserves legislation is almost entirely a matter of proclamation by the Governor-General-in-Council, in practice the Native Affairs Department. This government by regulation is not, in fact, as bad as it sounds on paper. There is little doubt that it is far better, at the present stage, to have sympathetic administration rather than meddlesome party-political legislation. Even in European areas there is much to be said in favour of special administration of Natives. As with the Native locations, the great objection is not so much to administrative separation as to the use that is made of it by the wealthy to evade their responsibilities to the poor—in fact, to make the poor responsible for their own social services. The more the Department of Native Affairs assumes responsibility for the government of Africans, the less will the Departments of Education, Social Welfare, Public Health, Labour, and Agriculture, to mention a few, feel that they have any duties beyond the European population. The growth of the Department of Native Affairs widens the gulf between the social interests of the European and the African, and tends to advance those of the former at the expense of the latter.

### 3. PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Provincial Councils in South Africa represent the compromise, arrived at in 1909, between the principles of federation and of union; they were established in order to allay the fears of the Free State and Natal that



their local rights, particularly in the matter of language, would be swamped by the larger provinces. The South Africa Act provided that the powers of Provincial Councils should not be altered for a period of ten years; since 1920, therefore, the Councils could, and can, at any time be abolished by the Union Parliament, an act delayed by fear of the voters in the smaller provinces rather than by the dictates of commonsense.

The Union Government appoints an Administrator for each province, and the Provincial Council elects an Executive Committee of four to assist him. The Councils themselves consist of as many members as there are M.P.s for the province, provided that no Council shall consist of less than twenty-five members. Voting qualifications are the same as for the Union Parliament, but in the Cape Province the Natives elect two Europeans, not three, as in the case of Parliament; in the remaining provinces Natives are unrepresented.

The functions of the Councils are delegated to them by Parliament, and all ordinances are subject to the approval of the Cabinet. The most important functions are primary and secondary education for Europeans, provincial roads, and the control of local government in the towns. The powers of the Councils to levy taxes are strictly limited, and they are unable to balance their budgets, depending on a Union subsidy for more than half their revenue. The subsidies consist chiefly of a per capita grant for European education, a block grant for Native education, and a grant for road construction; the Councils thus spend money for the raising of which they are not responsible.

Provincial boundaries in South Africa are historical, and what value they had disappeared when Union came. To-day these boundaries are a definite hindrance to progress, and result in such anomalies as the administration of Kimberley from Cape Town, about 500 miles away, instead of from Bloemfontein, about 100 miles away. Most business concerns have long since abandoned provincial boundaries in planning their national activities; so-called inter-provincial sport is no longer organised on a provincial basis; and the Government itself, in administering the railways, does not think in terms of provincial boundaries.

The effective work done by Provincial Councils could be managed comfortably by an Executive Council or four or five members, and the continued existence of the Councils is wasteful of money, leads to overlapping administration, and hinders sound national legislation. If the Councils were, as was originally intended, non-party, a case might be made out for their retention; but they are, in effect, pale reflections of the national legislature, though perhaps a shade more reactionary.

Local government is provided for by municipal councils, village management boards, divisional councils, elected school committees and boards, appointed road boards, and other bodies. Important as these bodies are in a study of local self-government, a close analysis of them is

out of place here. Local councils have a strongly-marked democratic tradition, provided democracy is reserved for Europeans; in the Cape Province the Coloured people have the municipal franchise, but elsewhere in the Union non-Europeans have no control over local government. In many locations the Native Advisory Boards are elected by the Native inhabitants, but the functions of these boards are purely advisory. As we saw in a previous chapter, Natives in urban areas are ruled by the municipal councils, subject to the approval of the Ministers of Native Affairs.

For many years, and until the last year or two, municipal politics were almost entirely in the hands of the English-speaking section of the town communities, particularly in the larger centres; this was true of the Republican days too, since the Afrikaner was a land-owning farmer content to leave the business side of things to the foreigner, chiefly British and German. To-day, still, the overwhelming majority of town councillors are English-speaking, and a large number of them cannot speak or understand Afrikaans. This state of affairs is due to the predominance of British and Jewish commercial and industrial interests in the towns; they are the principal owners of property. According to the 1936 census, 53% of urban Europeans had English as their mother tongue, though a larger percentage spoke Afrikaans too. Within recent years the Afrikaans cultural movement, concentrating on the Afrikaans language, has made very great strides in the towns, especially where there are large numbers of professional men and civil servants; and at the partial municipal elections each year an appeal is now frequently made for a candidate on the grounds that he is Afrikaans-speaking, to be voted for by all true lovers of the Afrikaans tradition. Since the Afrikaans cultural movement is largely mixed up with the Nationalist Party in politics, this has introduced a political element into municipal elections. A large proportion of the business and industrial employers are English by habit and thought, and, though it is to-day fashionable and economically worth while to speak about being a "South African" and to pay public tribute to Afrikaans, few of them trouble to learn the language or really to understand the Afrikaans tradition; and the staunch Afrikaners, grown embittered by patronising treatment, do not make it easier for any Englishman who might genuinely wish to co-operate.

Whatever industrial and commercial progress has been made in the towns is largely due to the non-Afrikaans section of the population. Similarly, the blame for the evil conditions in urban locations must be laid at the doors of the same non-Afrikaans section. British visitors to South Africa, and many English people who stay at home, are apt to give praise for the progress and either to overlook the slums or else to blame them on the Afrikaner, the embodiment of all suppression. It is time they realised that some of the worst conditions suffered by Natives in South Africa have been and are being imposed in the towns where the

Afrikaner emphatically does not rule. The Johannesburg slums are not the result of Afrikaner misrule; and while we cannot, of course, blame the municipal council of Johannesburg alone for capitalist slums, it is a fact that few of the members of that council, past and present, have ever had any acquaintance at all with the Afrikaans language or traditions.

#### 4. NATIVES' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

In 1920 the Union Government decided that it might be a useful thing to seek the opinion of the Native population whom it governed, and the Native Affairs Act of that year created machinery for summoning a Native Conference as frequently as the Government might find convenient; this method of consulting Native opinion was really a revival of a practice followed by the Republican Government of the Transvaal. The Conference met once at Bloemfontein and several times at Pretoria, but towards 1929 and 1930 it found too much to criticise in the Government's policy, and after that was not again summoned.

In 1935 the Native Affairs Commission convened a number of regional Native conferences to explain the proposed new legislation known as the Native Bills; these conferences almost unanimously condemned the bills, which were, nevertheless, passed by Parliament, though the Cape Native voters, by dint of constant agitation and with the assistance of European liberal opinion, managed to secure some small concessions. One of the bills, since become law, was the misnamed Representation of Natives Act of 1936. We have seen how it provided for the election of four Senators and three M.P.s to the Union Parliament. It also set up a body known as the Natives' Representative Council, which may be regarded as the latest attempt on the part of Parliament to secure a channel through which the Government may hear Native opinion without paying any heed to it.

This Council consists of the Secretary for Native Affairs as chairman, five European Chief Native Commissioners, four nominated Native members, and twelve elected Native members. As in the case of the election of four Senators to represent Natives, the country is divided into four electoral divisions, and the same electoral units are used. Of the three Natives elected by each electoral division, one represents urban Natives and two represent rural Natives; in the Transkei, however, all three members are elected by the General Council. The drawbacks, mentioned in regard to the election of Senators, of great distances and lumped votes, are of even greater force in the election of the Native members of the Council; few Natives have the necessary time and money to travel over such vast constituencies.

In an attempt to secure that no "agitator" would creep into the Council, Parliament inserted a clause disqualifying for membership any Native convicted under section one (twelve) of the Riotous Assemblies (Amendment) Act of 1930, briefly, an Act which gave the Government addi-

tional powers to deal with any Native who agitated against existing conditions; but this was not enough. To make it even more certain that no Native whom the Government might consider undesirable should find a platform in the Council, the Minister of Native Affairs is empowered by the act to declare a seat in the Council vacant on grounds of misconduct or "other cause".

This, then, is the Natives' Representative Council, the institution of which was loudly proclaimed as a notable experiment in Native self-government—"magnificent" was the word used to the writer by a visiting British M.P. The first election for the Council was held in 1937, and produced twelve well-known leaders of the Bantu bourgeoisie, men who speak well, who are rather vaguely liberal in thought, who criticise the Government's policy, but who remain bourgeois in outlook. This is not said with any intention of belittling their services to their people or of disparaging their abilities; but they are not leaders of the Bantu working class, and, as with previous attempts to consult Native opinion, they will not survive if they do much more than let off steam in a decorous manner.

It would be difficult to say how far the Council really represented Native opinion; indeed, it is difficult to say to what extent such a thing as Native opinion, apart from educated Native opinion, can be ascertained. The members of the Council are all well-educated men, if one does not define education purely by reference to university degrees, and have a sound general knowledge of their people. But what are they to do? If they demand what their people must obviously want, the abolition of colour bar laws, Parliament will refuse; if they do not demand this, they will, ultimately, be discredited in the eyes of their constituents. They will probably end by being "good boys", which is the Native equivalent for opportunist.

The functions of the Council are advisory, but, unlike the Native Conferences of an earlier period, its advice must by law be sought by the Government. Any bills particularly affecting Natives, or any provincial ordinance of the same nature, must be referred to the Natives' Representative Council for its opinion, though there is no obligation to accept that opinion; the report of the Council on the bill must be laid on the table in both Houses of Parliament. The Minister of Finance must submit his estimates of revenue and expenditure of the South African Native Trust Fund to the Council for consideration and report. Finally, the Council may ask the Government to introduce legislation to further the interests of the Native population.

When the bill establishing the Natives' Representative Council was being discussed in Parliament and in the country, extravagant claims were made for it by its sponsors. General Smuts even spoke somewhat lyrically about it as a Native Parliament, and he and others visualised, for the benefit of their audiences, the time when two parliaments would

exist in South Africa ; the Council was to be merely the first step towards this millennium, and the Natives should welcome it as such. A favourite trick was to compare the Council with the Bunga, or Transkeian Territories General Council. That had worked well, why not this? General Smuts ought to have known, and probably did, that two parliaments cannot exist in the same country. In reality the Council was not a first step towards anything more than European public opinion was prepared to tolerate ; and no seven-league boots were required to cover that distance. The comparison with the Bunga was fundamentally false ; that body is administrative, and controls funds ; the Council is advisory, and has only an advisory voice in the spending of revenue. The Bunga represents a purely Native area, whereas the Council represents Natives in the Reserves and in European areas ; if ever, therefore, its decisions could become law we should have the position of a Native "parliament" making laws affecting European areas. It requires abnormally long-sightedness to see a European parliament in South Africa deliberately setting up a Native Council to have legislative authority over European areas.

It comes to this, finally, that the Natives' Representative Council is a piece of machinery of which a wise government might make good use ; but it is highly improbable that the Council, as it is now constituted, will ever be more than a meeting of bourgeois Natives who are allowed to speak their minds provided they do not go too far and provided there is no danger of their proposals becoming law. In other words, the Council was really a method by which a European Parliament shunted Native representation on to a short side-track with a "stop" sign at the end of it.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FINANCE

#### I. INTRODUCTORY

WHAT WOULD modern historians say if William the Conqueror had included in his Domesday Survey this term of reference: "What proportion of the public revenue is contributed by the Anglo-Saxon population directly and indirectly? What proportion of the public expenditure may be regarded as necessitated by the presence of, and reasonably chargeable to, the Anglo-Saxon population?" Substitute for "Anglo-Saxon", "Native", and we have the fourth term referred to the Native Economic Commission in South Africa in 1930-1932. The reply of the Commissioners would give a fair indication of what modern historians would say about the Conqueror. It was this: "It is not usual in treatises on Public Finance to consider taxation and public expenditure from the

point of view of any one class of persons; the expenditure which the State considers necessary is regarded as a charge against the whole community, and it is the task of the Government to distribute this equitably among the various classes of persons which constitute the State."

This reply was deemed by many liberals in South Africa to constitute a dignified rebuke to the Government; in reality, of course, it is merely a good example of how facts may be concealed under a blanket of words. Apply both the term of reference and the reply of the Commission to the England, not of William I, but of George VI, and we shall see at once that, while it is certainly true that it is "not usual in treatises on Public Finance to consider taxation and public expenditure from the point of view of any one class of persons", it requires the rather "unusual" Cole's *The Condition of Britain* to show that, in practice, that is precisely what does happen. The poor do, in fact, pay for what they get, though "treatises on Public Finance" usually manage to conceal this.

What is true of Great Britain is true of South Africa, and in setting such a term of reference the Union Government of the day was merely suffering from an unusual burst of candour. It will become clearer, as we proceed to analyse the financial system of the Union, that the same separation occurs in the sphere of finance that has already been noted in the domain of administration of urban areas and of Reserves. The basic principle is always to make the Natives financially responsible for any expenditure "necessitated by their presence"—in plain words, to make them pay for themselves.

## 2. NATIONAL REVENUE

Officially there are three kinds of taxation in the Union: that which falls almost entirely on the European population, that which falls almost entirely on the Native population, and that which falls on both. The comparatively small percentage of Asiatics and Coloureds may, for this purpose, be lumped with the Europeans.

Excluding railways and postal services, since these are normally self-balancing, the two main items in the Union's annual revenue are customs and excise, accounting for about £12,000,000, or 30% of the total, and taxation on incomes of persons and companies (including mining), which produces about £16,000,000, or 44% of the total. (The figures here taken are those for 1936-1937, a typical year.)

With the first of these two items, customs and excise, it is impossible to say how much is contributed by Europeans and how much by Natives. Articles such as cotton blankets, second-hand clothing, and beads, are used almost solely by Natives, while motor spirits and motor-cars are used by them to a negligible extent only. Tinned food, sugar, tea, and similar articles are consumed by both Europeans and Natives, though the small purchasing power of the latter gives a low consumption per head of Native population. Probably we shall not be far out if we esti-

mate the contribution of the Native population under this head at about 15% of the total—that is, at about £1,800,000.

The customs tariff in South Africa is designed to protect industry and agriculture, and to produce revenue. By protecting industry is meant, naturally, protecting the interests of industrial shareholders and, to a lesser extent, those of the European skilled worker; the mass of unskilled Native labour benefits little, if at all, in the shape of better wages, and loses considerably by the increased price of consumers' goods, particularly of the class of goods required by poor people—blankets, cheap clothing, sugar, tinned foods, and other foodstuffs. Protecting industry, in effect, lowers the real wage of the poorest class. During the years 1932–1936 revenue from customs increased by 50%, from £8,000,000 to £12,000,000; during the same years the gross output of privately-owned factories in the Union increased by 55%, from £80,000,000 to £134,000,000; average annual wages of Europeans increased from £203 to £226, and those of non-Europeans *decreased* from £51 to £50. Add, finally, that the cost of living has increased (it is impossible from the official figures to say by how much), and we see at a glance that protective tariffs fall most heavily on the non-Europeans. As a method of raising revenue it is as regressive a system of taxation as it is everywhere else in the world.

Agriculture is protected in various ways. The tariff is lowered or abolished in the case of materials used in farming—agricultural implements, fencing materials, and power alcohol; in present circumstances almost the entire benefit of this goes to the European farmer. Railway rates, too, are used to provide uneconomic transport for farm produce and materials; in this case it is the industries that have to pay the higher rates in order to balance the railway budget. Finally, a whole system of subsidising exports is designed to benefit the European farmer, and operates to increase the internal price of foodstuffs; here again the poorest 70% of the population, white and black, are the sufferers. The case of maize may serve as an example of how exports are subsidised. The crop for 1939 is estimated at 30,000,000 bags, of which 10,000,000 will be consumed by the producers, largely as food for their Native workers or as feedstuff for cattle; the internal market is expected to absorb another 5,000,000 bags, which leaves 15,000,000 to be disposed of overseas by the Maize Control Board. At the time of writing (1939) the world price for maize is 6s. 6d. a bag, "an inadequate return" for the grower, so the Board has decided to fix the price of the 5,000,000 bags sold in the Union at a minimum of 10s. 6d. a bag; the 4s. per bag levy thus obtained will be used to increase the return to the farmer on his export crop to 7s. 6d. a bag. In other words, the sale of the 5,000,000 bags in South Africa must finance the export of 15,000,000 bags, and the overseas consumer will buy his maize at a lower price than the South African must pay. According to the regulations, a farmer may not sell

maize to one of his employees at less than the fixed price, though he may sell it at 2s. less *if it is to be used to feed animals*. The real victim of this system, which is not confined to maize, is the Native, partly because his staple food is maize, and partly because he is in a far worse economic position than the European to stand the increased price. As a footnote it might be added that the European farmers everywhere held protest meetings against the proposed action of the Maize Control Board, on the grounds that the fixed price was too low. On the other hand, there was a considerable volume of protest against the scheme as it affected the Native population, and the Government was compelled to modify its attitude; it was a modification of detail, not of principle.

In regard, therefore, to the customs system and the export policy, considered either as a source of revenue or as a method of assisting the agricultural producer and the manufacturer, we must conclude that the poorest people benefit least and suffer most from those policies. In the last year or two some small efforts have been made to subsidise the internal, rather than the external, market; but as yet the Native population has hardly been touched by that, though the poor whites have benefited to a small extent.

Income tax is presumed to fall entirely on the European population, but it is worth while trying to analyse this presumption along the following lines: whether or not it is justified, which class of the European population contributes most towards this item of revenue? And, if the presumption is not justified, how far does the Native contribute?

Normal income tax forms must be returned by persons and companies whose income exceeds £400 a year. After allowing for various abatements, the taxable income is arrived at, and, in round numbers, individuals pay just over 1s. in the £, companies pay 2s. 6d., and mining companies pay 3s. The abatements in the case of individuals are as follows: for married men there is a primary abatement of £400, an abatement of not more than £50 for insurance, not more than £10 for subscriptions to charities, of £100 for each unmarried child under the age of 21, and of £30 for a dependent other than a child. In practice this means that a reasonably insured married man with two children and an income of £650 a year will pay no income tax; if his income is £750 he will pay about £4. In the case of farmers, further deductions are allowed of amounts spent on fencing, dam-making, erection of buildings, prevention of soil erosion, erection of dipping tanks, bore-holes—in fact, on farming operations. It will be seen, thus, that it is a matter of some difficulty for a farmer to pay income tax, and that even for a professional man or a skilled worker taxation can hardly be described as excessive.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> During war the taxation has, of course, increased. There is no change in principle and the more normal pre-war figures are a safer guide to South African taxation.



In addition to normal tax, there is a supertax of from just over 1s. to a maximum of 5s. in the £ on incomes exceeding £2,500.

The following tables will reveal the situation more clearly.

TABLE XXII.

*Normal Tax and Supertax (1936).*

	No. of tax-payers.	Amount paid.	No. of Companies.	Amount paid.
Normal tax . . . . .	57,318	£1,316,218	2,392	£11,958,399
Supertax . . . . .	3,947	1,812,389	360	451,566
Totals . . . . .		£3,128,607		£12,409,965

Of the total revenue of £15,538,572 from income tax, therefore, individuals contributed £3,128,607, and companies £12,409,965. A further analysis of the normal tax is necessary to show its incidence.

TABLE XXIII.

*Percentage of Taxed Incomes (Normal Tax) According to Source of Income (1936).*

Source of income.	Percentage of income belonging to individuals.	Percentage of income belonging to companies.	Percentage of total income.
Trade and manufacture . . . . .	24	37	30
Employment and professions . . . . .	52	—	29
Farming . . . . .	4	—	3
Investments . . . . .	16	—	11
Banking and insurance . . . . .	—	9	5
Mining . . . . .	—	52	21
Miscellaneous . . . . .	4	2	1
Totals . . . . .	100	100	100

Allowing for the fact that taxation is on a different scale for persons, companies, and mining companies, we arrive at the following as an approximation of the percentage of normal tax paid by the different groups.

TABLE XXIV.

*Distribution of Normal Tax According to Source of Income (1936).*

Source.	Percentage of whole tax.
Trade and manufacture . . . . .	30
Employment and professional . . . . .	5
Farming . . . . .	0.5
Investments . . . . .	2
Banking and insurance . . . . .	6
Mining . . . . .	55
Miscellaneous . . . . .	1.5
Total . . . . .	100

From these tables it is apparent that at least 85% of income tax is paid by trade, manufacturing, and the mining industry, and that an almost negligible amount is paid by European farmers. The tables given in Chapter VI showed to what a great extent mining and manufacturing profits depended on low-paid Native labour; the possession of a taxable income is a direct result of the employment of Native labour.

On the whole, therefore, we are justified in concluding that the assumption that income tax is contributed solely by Europeans in South Africa is groundless. The question as to what proportion of income tax can reasonably be credited to the Native workers who help to produce it will be dealt with presently.

While Natives contribute considerably towards national revenue through customs duties and income tax, they also contribute directly by means of the general tax on Natives. This is a tax of £1 per year on all Native males between the ages of 18 and 65, irrespective of their wages or incomes; further, Natives living in Reserves pay an additional local tax of 10s. per hut, with a maximum of £2. There is no doubt at all that this tax is regressive in its incidence, and that it has the most serious effects on the health and efficiency of the Native population; Mrs. Ballinger, M.P., has calculated that the tax absorbs at least one-sixth of the purchasing power of the Native population. The Board of Trade and Industries found that a family of five in the Transkei receives a total cash income from all sources of £4 5s. 7d. a year, and from this amount £1 10s. must be paid in local and general taxes; in British Bechuanaland (a portion of the Cape Province) the situation is even worse; in European rural and urban areas it is not much better, and there are many farmers and urban employers who pay less direct taxation than their Native workers—less absolutely, not proportionately. In the year 1935-1936 there were twelve out of 455 districts where more than £10,000 was collected in

normal income tax, and these twelve paid £1,033,318 out of the total £1,316,218, or about 80% of the total; these districts were in the mining and industrial areas. The total contribution of the farming community for the same year was probably not more than £115,000. This can only mean one thing: that the vast majority of farmers pay no income tax, while their Native workers pay £1 per year in direct taxation. In the whole of the Free State, a typically agricultural province, 103,000 Natives paid the general tax in 1936, and only about 3,000 Europeans paid income tax. While there were only 3,000 European taxpayers, there were 27,000 motor-car owners.

When the seeker after information turns to the *Official Year Book* of the Union to discover how much is paid by the Native in the form of general tax, a curious thing is revealed. In the chapter headed "State Finance" the general revenue of the Union credits the general tax with having produced £769,662 in the year 1936-1937; in the chapter "Native Affairs", however, the general tax is said to have amounted to £1,282,678 in that year. What happens is that while the whole tax is paid into general revenue, two-fifths is paid by the Government into the South African Native Trust Account, and the balance remains in general revenue. (The proportion paid to the Trust Account has since been altered, but the principle is the same.) To understand this form of book-keeping the reader should bear in mind an earlier statement that the Native is always expected to pay for himself. By way of illustration, imagine the Minister of Finance saying to himself: "We have collected £3,000,000 in income tax from the European townspeople of the Union; but since Government is paying £2,000,000 for the education of their children, we shall credit the townspeople with paying £1,000,000 only, and the remaining £2,000,000 will be given to a special fund to pay for the education of their children." (One result of this form of book-keeping is that it enables people to say that the Natives do not, after all, pay so very much in direct taxation.) We shall return to this principle of the separation of accounts when we deal with expenditure; for the moment, however, we are concerned with taxation, and it can be definitely stated that the amount of the general tax for 1936-1937 was £1,282,678, or almost as much as the normal income tax paid by individual Europeans.

We are now in a position to estimate the contribution of the Native population to national revenue. The Native Economic Commission, referred to earlier in this chapter, took the view that since the Native population took a share of about 12½% of the national income, this might be used as a guide where more exact figures were not available. In some cases this would give a reasonably accurate result; but where we have to estimate the part played by low-paid labour in producing such an item as income tax from mines and industries, the ratio of one-eighth is far off the mark. Here, at a conservative estimate, one-fifth should be credited to the Natives. We arrive, then, at the following estimated figures.

TABLE XXV.

*Estimated Contribution of Natives to Union Revenue (1936-1937).*

General tax . . . . .	£1,282,678
Customs and excise . . . . .	1,800,000
Proportion (20%) of revenue from mining and industry . . . . .	2,000,000
Proportion (12½%) of revenue from Public Estate and misc. . . . .	2,000,000
Total . . . . .	<u>£7,082,678</u>

Out of a total revenue, excluding postal revenue, of about £38,000,000 in 1936-1937, then, the Native population contributed about £7,000,000, or about 18% of the whole.

## 3. NATIONAL EXPENDITURE

To find out what proportion of national expenditure is directly or indirectly spent on the Native population, we have to go to two sources: the national budget and the expenditure of the Native Trust Fund.

The table that follows requires some preliminary explanation. There

TABLE XXVI.

*Estimated Expenditure on Natives by Union Government (1936-1937).*

(Round numbers)

Service.	Total amount (in £'s).	Percent- age allo- cated to Natives.	Amount allocated to Natives (in £'s).
General government . . . . .	5,403,000	10	540,000
Law, order, and protection . . . . .	6,144,000	30	1,823,000
Higher education, science, etc. . . . .	1,039,000	0·7	7,000
Public health . . . . .	1,170,000	30	351,000
Lands and agriculture . . . . .	2,566,000	7	180,000
Mines, commerce, and industry . . . . .	900,000	10	91,000
External representation . . . . .	97,000	1	1,000
Public works . . . . .	1,198,000	14	277,000
Native affairs . . . . .	504,000	100	504,000
Labour, factories, and social welfare . . . . .	128,000	1	1,000
Unemployment and White labour . . . . .	290,000	—	—
Assistance to farmers . . . . .	2,074,000	—	—
Miscellaneous . . . . .	126,000	10	13,000
Public debt . . . . .	5,570,000	5	279,000
Subsidies to provinces (excluding grant for Native education) . . . . .	6,451,000	—	—
Totals . . . . .	33,669,000	—	4,067,000
Add grants to Native Trust Fund. . . . .	—	—	853,000
Total . . . . .	—	—	<u>4,920,000</u>

are items, such as Native Affairs and Grant to Native Trust Fund, where it is possible to say exactly how much can be allocated to the Native population; other items, such as Assistance to Farmers, do not benefit the Natives at all. With the majority of items there is no direct method of separating European and Native expenditure, and in these the ratios worked out by the Native Economic Commission have, in the main, been followed; they are unlikely to be exaggerated in favour of the Natives. Once more, postal and railway services have been omitted.

In round numbers, therefore, about £5,000,000 is spent on the Native population; and this is about £2,000,000 less than they contribute to revenue.

The division of revenue and expenditure into European and Native accounts is, of course, highly artificial and arbitrary; but it has to be made, since it illustrates so clearly the policy that South Africa follows. European taxation must not be spent on the African, and whatever benefit he may draw from such taxation is incidental and unavoidable. We saw the same principle at work in the urban areas where the locations must be self-supporting; it is at work in the Reserves where the local tax of 10s. per hut, or, in some cases, a quit-rent, must pay for local services.

The provincial authorities receive negligible amounts from the Natives by way of taxation, and what they spend on Native education comes from the Native Trust Fund. Neither locally, provincially, nationally, nor in the Reserves, therefore, does the Native population constitute a white man's financial burden; on the contrary, by its contribution to national wealth, Native labour carries the white population on its shoulders.

When we come, in later chapters, to the nature and extent of the services provided for Natives we shall see that they are just about what might be expected from the expenditure of less than £1 per head of Native population—£5,000,000 to 6,500,000 people. In so far as the Natives are concerned, taxation is emphatically not re-distributive. But what of the Europeans? When it comes to the white side of the colour line, the principle of making the poor pay for themselves is not carried out in South Africa to the same extent that the Coles suggest it is in Britain. Reference to the tables on the distribution of taxation will show that probably not more than 8% of the adult Europeans pay any tax on income; and large sections of the European population contribute very little towards either national, provincial, or local revenue. Nevertheless, they enjoy the service of compulsory and free elementary education, hospital services, roads, public works, agricultural facilities, general government and protection. And all this is the direct result of the existence of a large reservoir of low-paid Native labour that must produce the necessary wealth without sharing in its benefits. In this respect, colour distinction cuts across class distinction. Nevertheless, the reader will not be deluded into thinking that all Europeans are affluent. If he is tempted

to do so he should refer to the earlier sections, where it was shown that a fairly large class of Europeans is economically poor white. The point is, however, that the gold mines and Native labour between them carry this poor white population, so that the small capitalist class is able to live in security by paying out a small percentage of its profits in inadequate social services for the poor Europeans.

#### 4. POVERTY, GAOL, AND THE GENERAL TAX

The dependence of Native social services on the general tax paid by the Natives themselves has as one of its results that any move for a fairer system of taxation is met with the reply that those services, especially education, will suffer if the Natives pay less. In June of 1939, when Parliament was debating a bill for improving the collection of the tax, it was suggested to the Minister of Finance that it was unjust to tax Natives at eighteen years while Europeans were taxed at twenty-one. The Minister's reply was that if the age were raised there would be £250,000 a year less for Native "development". Many Europeans engaged in work among Natives realise the injustice of the tax, but are afraid to agitate for its amendment or abolition, lest their work should suffer for lack of the small funds that are available. Even the Natives themselves tend to accept the situation as pre-ordained. A recent Committee on Farm Labour (1938) reported that it had asked several Native witnesses whether they would be prepared to abolish the tax *and have no claim on social services*. They very naturally said no, and this reply was used to show that the Natives do not object to the tax. It would be interesting to watch European reactions if a Government commission were to put a similar question to European witnesses.

The main object of the general tax has always been to ensure an adequate labour supply. When Cecil Rhodes, who had reason to know the value of Native labour, introduced the tax in the old Cape Colony, he stated clearly that that was what he had in view; the tax used to be called a labour tax. To-day this aspect of the matter is not unduly stressed, except by a few Nationalist M.P.s, but it is still an active principle. For many years now something like 60,000 arrests are made each year of Native tax-defaulters, a number proportionately higher than the arrests for non-payment of the infamous salt-tax in pre-revolutionary France. Each year liberals in South Africa have pointed out the simple fact that this meant that the Natives were unable to pay, and that it was defeating the ends of justice and economics to imprison so many potential workers; but no impression could be made on the Government until an acute labour shortage on farms and mines began to be apparent in 1938. Largely as a result of this shortage Parliament decided, in June, 1939, not to lower the tax, but to make defaulters work for it; and the Minister of Finance stated in the House that he was confident that the farmers

would benefit by this arrangement. It is evident that the main object of the tax has not changed much since Rhodes' days.

Up till 1939 the method of collecting the general tax was simple if costly. Failure to produce a tax receipt on demand from any police official meant instant arrest, to be followed by trial on a *criminal* charge before a magistrate or Native Commissioner. The normal penalty for failing to produce the receipt is a fine of 10s. or imprisonment for fourteen days; after that the tax is still due, but no further criminal proceedings may be taken against the defaulter. Since the fine of 10s.—which may mean a month's wages—is usually more than the Native can pay, he goes to gaol, unless his employer is prepared to pay up. By this application of penal sanctions to the collection of the tax some 5% of the adult male population annually goes to gaol on what should be a civil charge; if we take into account that aged and decrepit Natives are exempted from the tax, the proportion of able-bodied Natives who go to prison will be considerably higher than 5%. In prison no distinction is made between real criminals and law-abiding Natives who have failed to pay their tax, and there is evidence that the whole system is, in fact, a particularly stupid method of creating a criminal class; it is, further, a method of tax-collection that involves great hardship and injustice, quite apart from the hardship and injustice of the tax itself.

None of these considerations weighed unduly with a Government intent on supplying labour to agriculture and industry, and it was this question of labour supply that finally produced an Inter-Departmental Committee to investigate tax-collection. This Committee found that annual loss of tax, in spite of penal sanctions, was about £100,000, and it recommended legislation to improve collection, to mitigate some of the hardships, and to make more efficient use of the inability of the Natives to pay. Acting on this, Government introduced, and Parliament passed, a Native Taxation Amendment Act (1939). Introducing the bill, Mr. Havenga, the then Minister of Finance in the United Party Government, said that the object of the bill was to facilitate collection and to avoid making criminals of tax defaulters. If that was the case we are compelled to assume an almost incredible degree of inefficiency on the part of governments in the Union since 1910; for the past fifteen years Mr. Havenga himself had been Minister of Finance, and during all that time there was no attempt to "avoid making criminals of tax defaulters". There is an Afrikaans expression, *nood leer bid* (necessity teaches us to pray), and it is possible that the urgent necessity of a labour shortage has at last driven Mr. Havenga and other Ministers to avoid making criminals.

And how does Parliament propose to do this? Mr. Havenga divided defaulters into three classes: those in employment who are unable to pay, those unemployed who are willing to work and then to pay, and those unemployed who will neither work nor pay. The first class—though he

himself said they were *unable* to pay—will be got at through their employers who will pay the tax and deduct it from the same wages that are unable to afford it. The second class will be offered employment on condition that the tax is the first charge on wages; such employment may be found on farms approved by the Native Commissioner and “paying the prevailing rate of wages”. Since there is no regulated wage for farm labourers, whose cash wages are, on an average, not more than 10s. a month, this would probably involve a period of at least six months’ labour to pay the debt. The last class of so-called “won’t works” are to be taught habits of industry by being detained in labour camps and put to work on road-making, irrigation schemes, and other construction work, for the benefit of the Europeans. The camps are, of course, to be self-maintained so that the taxpayers’ money is not wasted; a proportion of the wage paid for work in the camps will be deducted each month to cover the tax, and a first charge on the balance will be the expenses of the camp; if there is anything over after that it will be paid to the defaulter, who will thus have been taught the value of labour.

It is obvious that the new Act will be even more onerous than the old; and the fact—made much of by the supporters of the act—that the charge against a defaulter will now technically be a civil and not a criminal one has little real importance since imprisonment in any case follows, as a last resort, for failure to pay. In the debate on the bill the Nationalist opposition forgot its hatred of the United Party and welcomed the bill whole-heartedly; at the same time the impotence of the members representing the Natives was fully demonstrated; they criticised the bill accurately and severely, but with no practical results.

## CHAPTER IX

### LEGAL COLOUR BARS

#### I. INTRODUCTORY

VERY LITTLE legislation in South Africa is free from discrimination against one or other of the non-European races, and, while there are exceptions to the rule, what legislation lacks is frequently made up for administratively. Most of the barriers are erected against the Bantu, as distinct from the Asiatic and Coloured, and their main object is economic; it will, however, be seen, in a subsequent chapter, that there are also powerful social and historical forces at work to maintain the colour bar. Some of the spheres in which discrimination against the Native is active have already been noted; but it is worth while to attempt a synthesis of the actual legislation in force.



## 2. WHAT IS A NATIVE?

For general practical purposes the question at the head of this paragraph is easily answered. A Native is a member of an aboriginal African tribe; he is not a European, a Coloured person, or an Asiatic. The law, however, has to be more precise, and it is just this precision that is difficult to attain; for, once you embark on legislation based on colour or on race, you become involved in endless intricacies of legal definition, and your definition of a Native is apt to depend on what the particular law which is defining him wants to prohibit. Thus, in South Africa, there are a variety of legislative definitions of "Native". For the purposes of births, deaths, and marriage legislation, the Act defines a Native as "a person both of whose parents belong or belonged to an aboriginal race or tribe", including persons of mixed race living with Natives. The authors of the Representation of Natives Act, on the other hand, become considerably more involved, and go back a generation to define a Native as any person who is a member of an aboriginal tribe or race or whose *grandparents* were such; they then go on to define the conditions upon which a non-European may elect to be regarded as a Native, or may be so regarded by the law whether he likes it or not. The same Act also defines the procedure by which a "Native" may petition to be regarded by the law as a "non-Native". Under the Act only great-grandchildren of mixed marriages can have themselves declared "non-Native" and so obtain the right to vote in the Cape Province; the whole Act is an instructive lesson in how careful people ought to be in choosing their great-grandparents. The difference between the two Acts just mentioned is that, in the Act dealing with registration of births, deaths, and marriages, it is merely a matter of vital statistics where ignorance of how many Native babies die enables politicians to speak with greater confidence of "the rapidly increasing Native population"; strict definition is of little importance. In the second Act, however, the object is to prevent as many of the offspring of mixed marriages as possible from having their names inscribed on a common voters' roll.

Other Acts, such as the Liquor Act and the Native Land and Trust Act, have further variations on the theme which need not detain us here. For practical purposes it is fairly clear what "Native" means, though the variety of definitions may add additional colour to the statute book, and should provide enterprising lawyers with a pretty field of unexplored loopholes. Even if South African legislators are uncertain, readers will by now have gathered that Native means simply Native, a "person" who requires special legislation, whose legal rights are often insecure, and who has precious little hope of achieving citizen rights in the land of his birth.

Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of legislation that discriminate against the African: that specifically designed for the purpose, and that which contains no colour-bar clause, but which, nevertheless, either

through social custom or by administrative practice, is effectively discriminatory. The following paragraphs will deal in detail with some of the most important examples of colour-bar legislation.

### 3. REPRESENTATION

Beginning with the Act of Union, though, of course, the practice is much older, bars have been erected against the attainment of the normal franchise by Natives. That Act retained the Native franchise in the Cape Province but barred it in the other provinces; and it further discriminated against all non-Europeans by requiring that one of the qualifications for membership of both the Senate and the House of Assembly should be "pure" European blood. When, in 1930, women were enfranchised, non-European women were excluded; at the same time the franchise qualifications for European men in the Cape were lowered, but those for non-Europeans remained as before, effectively barring the vast mass of Natives from the vote because of the high property requirements.

In 1936 the Representation of Natives Act went still further in the matter of discriminating against the African. The right of a common franchise with Europeans, which he had possessed in the Cape, was abolished, and a separate Native electoral roll was established to elect three M.P.s. The Coloured people retained their vote, on a higher qualification than for Europeans and without women's suffrage; but both Coloured and Native lost their right to elect non-Europeans to the Cape Provincial Council. The Act of 1936 was, thus, retrogressive in every way, and the pious hope, expressed by Mr. Asquith in 1909, that the liberal views of the Cape would spread to the northern provinces, has been completely falsified; the exact opposite has taken place.

In the Cape alone are Coloureds and Asiatics represented on municipal councils with the right to elect members of their own race; they are represented in the Provincial Council and in Parliament, but by Europeans. Nowhere else in the Union do these two groups have local, provincial, or national representation. As for the Natives, in the Cape they elect three European M.P.s and two European members of the Provincial Council, but they have no municipal franchise; in the rest of the Union the Africans have no direct representation in any form of government. (The value of the four indirectly elected Senators has been previously discussed.)

For the sake of those people who, at a comfortable distance away from the problem, are inclined to condemn South Africa out of hand for not giving the vote equally to all its inhabitants, it is as well to point out that such a policy, applied now, would be stupid to the last degree. To enfranchise people who are illiterate, and ignorant of Western democratic forms of government, is an Act not of justice but of political insanity; such an Act would merely lend itself to corruption and jobbery without altering the existing economic balance one jot. Given a simple pastoral

economy, the Africans were perfectly capable of governing themselves on sound democratic lines ; but those simple conditions no longer apply, and, until a great many more Africans have been trained in Western ideas, no great extension of the franchise is possible or desirable.

What has just been said does not, of course, in any way excuse South African Governments for legislatively banging the door in the face of those Africans who are sufficiently advanced to take part in democratic government ; nor does it excuse them for failing lamentably to train sufficient Africans for the task of co-operating in the government of the Union. Finally, no amount of argument will cover up the fact that the real reason for keeping control of the legislature is that it enables the European ruling class to make those economic arrangements that best suit its own narrow interests ; it enables the ruling class to entrench itself against the African working class. That is exactly what every ruling class does, not only in Africa.

#### 4. LAND

At the time of Union Natives might purchase and occupy land, with certain less important limitations, everywhere in the Union except in the Free State. In 1913 the Land Act discriminated against them by withdrawing this right, though the courts decided that the Act was not applicable in the Cape. The Natives Land and Trust Act of 1936 finally abolished the right of Natives to own land outside the Reserves.

Asiatics and Coloureds may own land in the Cape, and Asiatics have until now managed to find loopholes in a Transvaal law that was designed to restrict their ownership of land in that province ; their position is, however, precarious, and Parliament has already threatened to alter the law. Further, Government has promised to introduce legislation to provide for separate residential areas for Coloureds and Asiatics in the Cape and Natal, so that the right of ownership will be restricted to areas demarcated on colour-bar principles. In the matter of land ownership, therefore, discrimination on the grounds of colour is either absolute or about to become so.

There is no need to repeat in detail how the virtual landlessness of the Natives affects their economic position ; but it is as well to emphasise that all land legislation, national or local, that creates separate areas for different races, is fundamentally a policy of making each race pay for its own social services.

#### 5. RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT

Pass laws restricting the movement of workers were part of a well-tried system of government in Europe before the British introduced them to South Africa in the beginning of the 19th century. The Boer Trekkers were apt pupils of the British, and took the new system of controlling Natives with them to the republics they established ; in the meantime

the influence of the Philanthropic Movement had succeeded in getting the system abolished at the Cape. To-day the position is that no passes are required in the Cape, except in the Reserves, where permits to enter or leave are necessary; a Native male in the Transvaal and Free State who wishes to move from one district to another requires a pass from his employer or from an official; in Natal a pass is required by Natives to enter or leave the province. Nowhere inside the Reserves is a pass necessary.

Any police official may at any time demand to see a Native's pass, and failure to produce it means a fine or imprisonment, in practice the latter; a Native must also show a pass to the booking-clerk at a railway station before he will be issued with a ticket. About 6,000 Natives throughout the Union are exempted from bearing a pass, but, unless they are well known to the local police, they must be in possession of the letter of exemption.

Various official reasons are given for the continuance of a system that irritates without being effective: it is a method of "controlling" the Natives, of tracing criminals, of preventing desertion, of preventing the entry of "undesirable" Natives into overcrowded slum areas, and of affording protection to rural Natives coming into the strange surroundings of town life. As regards all except the last of these reasons, official statistics show that not one of the objectives is attained. About 90% of the prosecutions under the pass laws take place in the Transvaal, largely on the Witwatersrand; we should therefore expect that, where the pass laws were most strictly enforced, we should find better control, less desertion, more effective tracing of criminals, and fewer overcrowded slum areas. The Witwatersrand, however, happens to be an area where these things are exactly what we do not find.

Since passes are written, often on scraps of paper difficult to preserve, they are easily lost, destroyed, or mutilated. Further, Natives who have learned to write forge passes, either in self-defence or for criminal purposes; the system therefore induces law-breaking. The flow into the towns in recent years is proof of the baselessness of the fond belief of farmers that the pass system will help them to retain their labour; recently the national and provincial authorities decided to refuse to employ farm labourers who could not produce a pass from their employers giving them permission to seek work. Even this has not stemmed the townward drift, because the pass system severely hinders, but only occasionally prevents, the movement of Native labour.

Imprisonment for failure to produce a pass has the same effect that we noted in the case of tax defaulters: it introduces law-abiding citizens to gaol life and manufactures criminals. All this, and more, has been pointed out time and again by Native leaders and by liberal Europeans; but action will presumably be delayed until a rather obvious economic argument presents itself in favour of the abolition of the whole system.

There is a good deal to be said in favour of an identity card for Natives coming into urban areas. Such a card would, if failure to produce it were not made a criminal offence, be a real protection and benefit to the Natives. It is often difficult, even with the present elaborate pass system, for the authorities to trace the family of a Native who dies in a town location or on the mines, and an identity card, freely issued on durable paper, would act as a protection, and would not be resented by the Natives.

The ordinary travel-pass is not the only one required by the Native. The current tax receipt, since it has to be produced on demand, is in effect a pass. In all urban areas, too, a Native must possess a night-pass if he wishes to be in the town between the hours of 10 p.m. and 4 a.m.; these curfew regulations are local, and the times vary. This night-pass system applies to the Cape as well as to the other provinces, but registered voters are exempted. In the urban areas, too, any Native visiting his friends, or wishing to seek employment in that area, must obtain a pass from the local administration; these passes are issued for a limited period, usually one week, and the pass to seek for work is refused by the local authorities if they consider that there is no further demand for labour at the time of application.

In the worst case, therefore, a Native in an urban area might have to be in possession of four passes the absence of any one of which might, and does, entail arrest and imprisonment. It must be remembered, further, that the contravention of pass regulations is a criminal, not a civil, offence; a conviction acts, therefore, in future cases as a "previous conviction" deserving of greater punishment.

There are few aspects of European rule that the Natives hate as much as they do the pass laws and regulations. They consider them, correctly, as badges of inferiority put upon them by the dominant class. The pass laws lay them open to unnecessary interference by the police, and the fines imposed are out of all proportion either to the offence or to the income of the Native. The psychological reactions set up in the African mind by pass laws must be considerable, and one has only to watch the intensity of the resentment expressed by a non-exempted educated African to realise what a store of hatred is being accumulated.

## 6. LABOUR

There are a number of Acts on the statute book that affect the Bantu as a worker by placing European employers or workers in a more favourable position. Perhaps the most famous is what is popularly called the Colour Bar Act. In 1911 Parliament passed the Mines and Works Act, empowering Government to regulate the issue of certificates of competency in skilled occupations in mining and engineering. When the Government used this power in 1923 to prevent Natives from obtaining these certificates the courts declared the regulations *ultra vires*. European Trade Unions, fearing that their monopoly of skilled jobs on the mines

would be broken, agitated until the Nationalist-Labour Government passed an amending Act in 1926. This was the Colour Bar Act, which limits the granting of certificates in engine-driving, blasting, surveying, and other skilled occupations in mines and works, to Europeans, Cape Coloureds, "Mauritius Creoles, or St. Helena persons"—in fact, to every race except the Bantu. In other parts of Africa where mining is carried on, in Northern Rhodesia, for example, blasting certificates are granted to Africans; but in the Union, no matter what skill in mining operations the African may attain, the higher jobs are reserved for, and jealously preserved by, the European workers.

So far the Colour Bar Act has been confined to mining; but the same object has been achieved by different methods in many other skilled trades. The Apprenticeship Act, for example, is used to prevent Africans from acquiring skill by refusing to enroll them as apprentices. The use of skilled labour is thus severely restricted in the interests of the European worker, and the effect is not only to depress the Native worker, but to limit output. Employers of labour would, not unnaturally, prefer to employ more Native labour at lower wages, but European Trade Unions are too strong and too reactionary to agree to this. Skilled labour is constantly being imported from overseas, thus increasing the economic burden that industry and the African must bear. To such lengths does fear of Native "competition" go.

Other laws that differentiate against the Native workers are the various masters' and servants' laws and the Native Labour Regulation Act. These govern the service contract between Europeans and Natives, and make it a criminal offence for the latter to refuse to obey an order or to break a contract. In other words, the right to strike is taken away from the Native worker. Where they are employed on daily or weekly contracts this is not a serious handicap, and a whole series of semi-successful strikes have occurred in the Witwatersrand area. For the large majority of African workers, however, the difficulties in the way of effective combination are almost insuperable. The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 (amended in 1930) provides for the registration of unions of employers and employees; but it specifically excludes "pass-bearing Natives". It is only in the Cape, therefore, that Native Trade Unions may be registered and that effective direct action may be taken without committing a crime that calls for police interference on behalf of the employers.<sup>1</sup> The Industrial Conciliation Act provides for Conciliation Boards of employers and workers to settle disputes concerning the conditions of labour in the particular industry; the Board recommends an agreement to the Minister, who then makes it binding on the whole industry. Since all industries employ both Europeans and Africans, the object of such an agreement might be defeated if individual employers, faced with an agreement that raised wages and reduced hours, increased the number of Native

<sup>1</sup> See footnote to page 30.

workers and reduced the number of Europeans. To avoid this, the Board may ask the Minister to fix the hours and wages for Natives employed in that industry. This means that the Native workers, who are not admitted to the Trade Union because they are Natives, may have the conditions of work fixed for them, without consultation, by the white employers and workers. It should be added that, in the Cape, more and more Trade Unions are now admitting Native members, as they have for years admitted Coloured and Asiatics; but the majority of Trade Unions still adhere rigidly to their colour bar.

The Wage Act of 1925 (amended in 1930) was intended to provide a method of wage-fixing that would apply to unskilled and unorganised labour, particularly in sweated industries. It contains no colour bar, but it is cumbersome in its machinery. The Wage Board may make an investigation into the conditions of an industry, but if it finds itself unable to recommend a wage that will "enable the employees to support themselves in accordance with civilised habits of life", it must not make a recommendation, but must simply report that fact to the Minister, who may, or may not, then ask the Board to make a determination irrespective of civilised standards. In most cases so far the Board has been unable to recommend a civilised wage for Natives, but it has been instrumental in raising European and Native wages in a number of industries. This success is due to the fact that the industries concerned included European workers; with one exception, the Minister has refused to take further steps when only Natives were involved in the determination. The Wage Act does not apply to farm labour, to domestic servants, or to Government employees, so that, in any case, its scope is limited.

The Workmen's Compensation Act differentiates between European, Asiatic, Coloured, and African workers; once more, farm labourers and domestic servants are excluded. Natives employed on mines are compensated under the Native Labour Regulation Act and the Miners' Phthisis Acts. In all cases the compensation paid to the Natives is about one-eighth that paid to Europeans; and it is usually a lump sum payment where the European worker may receive weekly or monthly benefits.

## 7. NATIVE ADMINISTRATION

Reference has several times been made in previous chapters to the growth of the functions of the Department of Native Affairs and to the development of government by proclamation. The very existence of the Department of Native Affairs is, of course, an example of colour-bar government; but there is one aspect of the tendency to increase the functions of the Department that constitutes an even more glaring example of discriminating legislation. It was explained earlier what wide powers the Minister of Native Affairs, on behalf of the Governor-General or Supreme Chief, exercised over Natives in three out of the four provinces

of the Union. Outside a Fascist country no other Minister has such powers; and in the Union European opinion would never tolerate such executive control except in time of war when martial law had been declared. Now these powers may be increased at will, and by Proclamation 162 of 1932 they were so increased. The whole story of how the extraordinary powers to govern by proclamation came to be concentrated in the hands of the Minister of Native Affairs provides such an instructive lesson in the art of Native administration that it is worth while dealing with it in some detail. The idea of creating the head of the executive government Supreme Chief over Native tribes originated about eighty years ago in the fertile brain of an able but individualist administrator of Natives in Natal; that was Shepstone. Dealing chiefly with the Zulus, he came to the not unnatural conclusion that the despotic chieftainship was the typical form of Bantu government; how erroneous this conception was has been explained. Subsequently, in the same colony of Natal, a code of Native laws was drawn up according to which Natives in that colony were to be governed in their tribal Reserves with the Governor as Supreme Chief. In 1927 and 1929, when the Union Government and its advisors on Native affairs brought together in one comprehensive Act, the Native Administration Act, as much as possible of the existing legislation affecting Natives, the conceptions of a Supreme Chief and of the Natal Native Code were taken over, and such powers as were formerly vested in the Supreme Chief in Natal by the Native Code were now vested in the Governor-General of the Union. By an amending Act, these powers were extended to include that of altering the Natal Native Code. In effect the Supreme Chief could now, by proclamation, alter the powers of the Supreme Chief.

Using these new powers to alter his own powers, the Minister of Native Affairs issued the Proclamation of 1932 (mentioned above) by which the old Natal Native Code was abolished and a new one introduced; the new Code vastly increased the powers of the Minister and of those officials acting on his authority. Further, it not only increased the authority of the officials of the Department, but it removed the control which the ordinary courts of the land had formerly exercised over the actions of those officials. Section 10 of the new Code states that "neither the Supreme Court nor any other court of law shall have jurisdiction to question or pronounce upon the validity or legality of any act done, direction or order given or punishment inflicted by the Supreme Chief in the exercise of his powers, authorities, functions, rights, immunities or privileges". When it is realised that those powers include the right to command the obedience and assistance of chiefs and Natives in the execution of any reasonable order, and that refusal to comply is regarded as "showing disrespect" to the Supreme Chief and is a crime, it will be seen that the "authorities and immunities" of the Great White Chief are considerable. Could bureaucracy go farther without being called by



another name? And the delicious irony of it all is that all this is done and justified in the name of "governing the Natives according to their own customs".

The provisions of the Code are applicable chiefly to Natives living in Reserves outside the Cape Province, and, while there is a good deal to be said for a legislative and administrative system specifically designed to meet the needs of tribal Natives, there is nothing at all to be said for what Senator Brookes calls "the licensed and irresponsible despotism of the Supreme Chief (or in practice, of officialdom generally)". From most points of view the Native Administration Act, the keystone of Native administrative policy in the Union, must be regarded as a piece of colour legislation unsurpassed in democratic lands for its bureaucratic nature; and it is to a department with such powers that more and more legislative and administrative authority is constantly being given by Parliament. It is government neither according to Bantu custom nor in keeping with European democratic ideas. That the powers of the Native Affairs Department have not so far been grossly abused is due to the character of the officials and the docility of the subjects they rule.

Another aspect of Native administration that differentiates sharply between European and Bantu is that, increasingly, what are considered the rights of a subject for Europeans are regarded as "privileges" for the Natives. The matter of exemption from pass laws illustrates this well. For a Native to obtain exemption from the pass laws, application is made to the Native Affairs Department, and such an application is not granted as a matter of course if the applicant has the necessary qualifications; it *may*, in the discretion of the Department, be granted. It is a privilege, not a right. Native administration is full of such privileges granted to good boys. Indeed, the conception that any recognition of a right is really a gift from the white man permeates European thought in South Africa. Farmers who pay their labourers in cash and kind commonly consider the second part of the wage as a gift. It is no wonder that the principle has been accepted so wholeheartedly in Native administration.

## 8. SOCIAL WELFARE LEGISLATION

The Union Department of Social Welfare came into existence in 1937, and now administers various Acts formerly dealt with by other departments. These Acts, and their administration, afford good illustrations of how the colour bar works in matters of social welfare.

The Old Age Pension Act (1928) makes provision for European and Coloured aged and destitute persons. In both cases the lowest pension is £6 a year, while for Europeans the highest is £42 and for Coloureds £21. Natives and Asiatics are excluded from the Act, though Asiatics are cared for administratively. In 1927 the Natives' Representative Council asked the Government to include Natives in the provisions of the Act, but the request was refused.

The Blind Persons Act (1936) makes provision for three types of assistance. In the first place, pensions are granted of from £1 to £36 a year for Europeans, and from £1 to £19 a year for Coloureds; Natives and Asiatics are not allowed to share in even this miserly scale of pensions, though they are given (again we have the "gift" mentality) help administratively. In the second place, Government pays grants-in-aid to societies for the blind, irrespective of colour. Finally, augmentation grants in respect of blind persons' earnings are paid to Europeans and Coloureds only.

The Children's Act of 1937, known as the Children's Charter, started life well without a colour bar, except, of course, in the amount of money paid as grants. (The notion that it costs less to feed a destitute Native than it does to feed a destitute European is a curious, but nevertheless prevalent, one.) It is an important piece of legislation based on modern principles of dealing with juvenile delinquents and of protecting children. Mothers' pensions, now administered by the Social Welfare Department under this Act, were formerly paid, on different scales, to Europeans and Natives alike under an older act of 1920. In 1939, however, the Department of Social Welfare decided that it was high time the Native poor did more for themselves, otherwise they would be pauperized. So a circular was sent to all magistrates and Native Commissioners, who have to order the grants, that in future these would be administered by the Native Affairs Department. No cash allowances are now to be made to Native mothers in urban areas, because "it is felt that the payment of cash allowances to Natives residing in towns will be an incentive to Native women to flock to the urban areas, and thus aggravate a position that has already become acute". In future, therefore, magistrates must either first try to repatriate to a rural area the child on whose behalf application has been made, or, if the mother can work, he may arrange for the child to be left at any crèche established by a local organisation and subsidised by the Department. Failing both these desperate remedies, the magistrate may grant an order for food for the child, and "the cost of such food to be charged to the South African Native Trust". Once more, then, the European is assisted from general revenue, to which the Natives contribute, but the Native must pay for himself.

The argument advanced, in the circular just referred to, why rural mothers should no longer be assisted, even from the Natives' own Trust Fund, is stated thus: "Having regard to the fact that under Native law it is the natural duty of the head of the kraal or guardian-at-law to support any minor belonging to his kraal or under his care, and that the granting of maintenance by the State will probably lead to an evasion of the responsibility resting upon the Natives under their tribal customs, it has been decided not to make grants in the case of Native children residing in rural areas." The circular adds, as an excuse, that the Government is spending "large sums of money" in "improving the economic

conditions of the Natives in rural areas, and it is considered that sufficient is being done in this way to enable the Natives to provide for their own children". The last part of this statement is simply not true. The first part, in which an appeal is made to Bantu custom, neglects altogether the fact that Bantu custom could only function under the economic conditions of the pre-European stage; to drag in the natural duties of the head of the kraal as an excuse for eliminating mothers' pensions is, under the conditions of poverty created by capitalism, infamous. It must have been a matter of considerable satisfaction to the Department of Social Welfare to be able to add to its circular: "This circular is issued with the concurrence of the Departments of Justice and Native Affairs."<sup>1</sup>

There is no need to give further examples of colour-bar laws in matters of social welfare. Where no legal colour bar exists the Department will, sooner or later, hand the administration over to the Department of Native Affairs, and the expense will be passed on to the Native Trust Fund. Unemployment insurance, rural housing, hostels for low-paid workers, assistance for the physically unfit, homes for the aged—all these are inadequately provided for Europeans, very occasionally for Coloureds and Asiatics, but not at all for Africans.

#### 9. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

In the public administration of the Union there is a double colour bar operating against the non-European generally, but in particular against the Natives. In the first place, all but the very lowest-paid civil service jobs are reserved for Europeans; and the salary and pension scales are much lower for Natives than for Europeans, even when the same work is done. In the Belgian Congo Natives drive engines on the public railways and serve Europeans and non-Europeans alike in the post offices and other public buildings. Such positions are not attainable by the Natives in South Africa, though their general standard of education is higher than in the Congo. In purely Native administrative services many Africans are, of course, employed, but even there the highest departmental jobs are not open to them.

In the second place, the European civil service has a strong colour bar in its dealings with the general public. Postage stamps cost the same for black and white, but they are sold at different counters, and the service for the Europeans is more civil, more convenient, and less condescending. Many a postal official appears to be conferring a signal favour on a Native when he attends to his wants, and there is no need to be surprised at this, nor to blame the officials unduly; they are the servants of the ruling class, and act accordingly.

<sup>1</sup> It is announced (May 1940) that the Dept. of Social Welfare has once more taken over the administration of Mother's pensions. Whether it has done so permanently, remains to be seen.

On the State railways Natives usually travel third class, an altogether different affair from the comfortable third-class accommodation of the British railways; there is nothing to prevent a Native from buying a second- or first-class ticket, but then he must travel in a specially reserved coach, and he will have to have his meals served in his compartment, since he will not be admitted to the dining-saloon. American Negroes who visit South Africa to lecture, or for purposes of investigation, are in the same position. Very few Natives would be in a position to make use of the air service run by the South African Railways, but it is doubtful whether they would be able to do so even if they could afford it. When Mr. Matthews, a Native Lecturer at Fort Hare Native College, was appointed by the Imperial Government to a Commission in East Africa, he was refused a seat in the planes of Imperial Airways, a company subsidised by the Imperial Parliament. It is improbable that the South African Government will be less colour conscious.

Either there is no accommodation on railway stations provided for Natives, or else it is of a very poor quality; few stations have porters to assist Native women, and equally few have restaurants where Natives may be served. The facilities for taking tickets, for booking luggage, for reserving accommodation, are all inferior to those provided for Europeans. The price of the ticket, however, remains the same; there, at any rate, no colour bar exists.

What is true of the railways and the post offices is true of all Government offices and departments. Very few local, provincial or national offices are without their "Natives here" and "Europeans here" signs. To the ordinary run of unsophisticated and uneducated Natives this separation is probably a blessing in disguise, since they would otherwise have to compete with Europeans for the attention of the officials; and the ordinary educated or uneducated European would never tolerate that. The class on whom this colour distinction embodied in the sign "Europeans here" presses most hardly at the moment is the Bantu middle-class. African schoolmasters, doctors, civil servants, and other professional men and women feel the slight to their race keenly, but few of them realise that the colour-bar laws are, in reality, pure class legislation imposed by the ruling class. These men and women are in the unfortunate position of the *petit bourgeoisie* who are afraid of being pushed down to the working-class level but are unable to attain to a European social and economic level. To most of them "Europeans only" is a personal affront to their dignity, and it makes them psychologically maladjusted rather than rebellious on behalf of their people. Instead of feeling angry at a system that economically enslaves their race, they feel irritated and hurt that their hard-won education and social position should not have gained them emancipation.

## 10. CONCLUSION

In the preceding paragraphs a few only of the colour-bar laws of the Union have been dealt with. The Defence Act, the Liquor Act, the Native Service Contract Act, and a host of others are based on colour distinctions. Other Acts, such as the Riotous Assemblies Act, the Stock Theft Acts, and the Universities Act, while purporting to contain no bar, do in practice effectively discriminate against the Natives. We have seen how the whole system of taxation is based on differentiation. These Acts need not be dealt with here, though the operation of some of them will be dealt with in later chapters. From what has been said in this chapter alone, it is fairly obvious that the fundamental characteristic of the colour bar is its class nature. The ruling capitalist class in South Africa is acting in character by maintaining its economic stranglehold on the working class. But the situation is more complicated than that. A large number of Europeans are also being exploited by the capitalists, are also economically weak and, in many cases, below the bread line. The chief difference between the poor white and the poor black is that capitalism is forced, in South Africa as elsewhere, to pay tribute in the shape of social services to the European working-class, while the excuse of colour and race enables it to avoid even that in the case of the Natives. The colour bar is, therefore, a double exploitation of the African, once as a worker and once as an African; and the European worker has not realised that his own exploitation will only cease with that of the African.

## CHAPTER X

### CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

#### 1. THE LEGAL MACHINERY

**L**AW is administered in South Africa under a system that provides for magistrates, special justices of the peace, and the Judges of the Supreme Court. Justices of the peace may be appointed in remote country districts at distances outside of a twenty-mile limit from the urban seat of a magistracy, and their proceedings are subject to review and appeal by the district magistrates. For practical purposes the courts of justices of the peace and of magistrates may be treated together. In both cases the officials are paid servants of the Department of Justice and are removable by the Minister of Justice. The summary jurisdiction of the magistrate is limited to a fine not exceeding £50, imprisonment not exceeding six months, and whipping not exceeding fifteen strokes; but this jurisdiction is doubled, as regards fines and imprisonment, in the case of remittal. All decisions of the magistrate are subject to appeal to the Supreme Court, and any

sentence of more than three months, or more than £25, or of whipping, is automatically subject to review by the judge in chambers, who may reduce or quash the sentence, but may not increase it. This power of review extends to all cases tried by a magistrate when it has been brought to the notice of the Supreme Court that the trial in the lower court was not in accordance with justice. The magistrates' courts also have civil jurisdiction, limited, in practice, to cases involving not more than £200.

The Supreme Court consists of judges appointed by the Executive but removably only by Parliament on petition by the people. The Court has an Appellate Division and a number of local and provincial divisions, and goes on circuit at regular intervals. Appeal to the Privy Council in London has not yet been abolished, in spite of strong pressure from the Nationalist Party; but the right of appeal is restricted financially and legally to such an extent as to be of little practical significance.

Normally criminal trials are held before a judge and jury, but the accused may choose whether he wishes to be tried by a judge without jury; since 1935, the Minister of Justice may direct that certain cases, where the accused is a non-European, must be tried without a jury. Jury service is a duty in the case of men and a right to be applied for in the case of women; there are no mixed juries of men and women. Only Europeans serve on juries, which consist of nine men or women, and a verdict of seven to two is sufficient to secure a conviction. There is no Grand Jury in South Africa.

Previous chapters have dealt with the various courts of chiefs and of Native Commissioners which try civil and criminal cases in the Reserves, and with the Native Appeal Courts and Native Divorce Courts that apply Native customary law in civil cases where Natives only are involved.

The basis of South African civil law is the system known as Roman-Dutch law, while the criminal procedure is fundamentally British. The development of urban and industrial life along familiar capitalist lines has, however, profoundly influenced both civil and criminal law and procedure by means of national, provincial, and local legislation.

Such, briefly, are the dry bones of the legal system, and it remains to be seen what shapes the live body assumes.

## 2. JUDGES AND MAGISTRATES

In a debate in the House of Assembly, in May of 1939, the then Minister of Justice, General Smuts, said: "Well, it is a curious reflection upon human nature, but it is the practice not only in this country but in most countries in the world to look upon offences against property as more serious than offences against persons. I am not in agreement with that. It is a curious survival from ancient times. It is not in accordance with the higher standards of our day. There was a time when property was considered more sacred than personalities. We shall have to change

all that unless we are to be overtaken by the dangers in the world and personalities disappear altogether. There is this tendency for the old idea to exist, and you will find it reflected in the sentences of the courts. I do not think honourable members should stress that unduly, but it is a lamentable fact." This statement was not made in support of legislation that might begin to "change all that", but as a cold acceptance of the existing "lamentable fact" which honourable members should, for obvious reasons, not stress unduly. As an analysis of the present condition of justice in South Africa the statement does not go far enough. Just as colour-bar legislation was a reflection of a double exploitation of the African, once as worker and once as African, so the administration of justice falls with double severity on the African proletariat. From the Minister of Justice down, the law and its administration are, as we should expect, instruments for safeguarding the rights of the employing class, and the disabilities that Natives suffer as a result of their inferior status are nowhere so strikingly illustrated as in the field of justice. In South Africa, as in England, the catch-phrases "equality in the eyes of the law", "a man shall not be tried except by a jury of his peers", and "a man is innocent until he is proved guilty", are all current; but when colour prejudice is superadded to economic inferiority such phrases become nothing but a smoke-screen for injustice. In the Union, Natives are *not* equal to Europeans in the eyes of the law; they are frequently *not* tried by a jury of their peers; and, technically and practically, they are often assumed to be guilty unless they can prove their own innocence.

Before proceeding to a more detailed study of the injustices suffered by Natives it is as well to state clearly that South African judges are neither unjust nor brutal; on the contrary, the record of the bench in South Africa is exceptionally high. The judges are independent of the Executive and are not afraid to criticise. It would be invidious to mention names, but many of the judges are men who, before their elevation to the bench, took leading parts in urging reform of unjust legislation, and who have, subsequent to their elevation, done much to redress some of the worst evils. The bench has been particularly watchful to reduce severe magisterial sentences; and it was probably largely due to the influence of the judges' conference that the jury system was altered to avoid some of its worst scandals. The judges realise clearly, however, that in giving more lenient sentences they are against the mass of European public opinion, and that to proceed too fast will be to create a gap between the European population and the judiciary; if that is done all their ameliorative efforts will be in vain. It is, of course, against all reason to expect a body of judges to alter the nature of justice under capitalist conditions; that can, ultimately, only be done by the workers themselves. But it is no small thing, at the present stage in South African history, to have an independent judiciary consisting of men who courageously interpret a liberal philosophy and are not blinded by colour prejudice.

Though the same high praise cannot be accorded to the magistrates, it is, nevertheless, true that a large number of them are civil servants of high standing who carry out their duties honourably. In their case, however, there cannot be the same independence as with the judges. In the smaller towns they are continuously under the influence of their European fellow-citizens, and, like them, have been brought up to regard the Native as in every way an inferior being. Their social environment and the pressure of public opinion prevent them from dealing leniently with Natives accused of crimes against Europeans, or being sufficiently severe with Europeans who have ill-treated Natives. If a magistrate is persistently too lenient in Native cases the district will petition the Minister of Justice to have him removed to another district; and this is a form of promotion that few magistrates would court.

Magistrates and, to a smaller extent, judges, are therefore under continuous pressure from the only public opinion that counts, in terms of legislation, to interpret the law in the spirit of the colour bar. If they did not do this they would hardly be judicial officers in a capitalist colour-bar society.

### 3. THE NATIVE "CRIMINAL" BEFORE THE MAGISTRATE

In the dozen or so large industrial areas the magistrates' courts deal with an incredible number of cases each year. In Johannesburg the courts handle 100,000 Native cases during the course of any one year, and neither the magistrate nor the prosecutor has time to deal with these cases adequately; if they did, they would never finish their work.

What is it that, annually, brings about one-third of the Native population into contact with the law? More than 50% of the "crimes" are statutory offences against the pass laws, the tax law, the Native Labour Regulations, municipal regulations, and other laws that have reference to Natives only; when these laws do refer to Europeans, they are civil and not criminal offences.

Possibly another 45% of the crimes in the larger centres are those of petty thieving and housebreaking—crimes against property. In the first place, sheer poverty accounts for much of the theft; in the second place, the criminal code in South Africa conforms neither to the social nor to the economic needs of the Natives, and laws will, ultimately, only be obeyed if they have an inherent sanction in society itself. Bantu urban society has lost most of its customary tribal sanctions and is developing new sets of sanctions in the urban environment; but, since its social and economic condition is determined by European-made law without reference to Native needs, it is hardly surprising that the Native feels no strong inner urge to respect the rights of property when he is in need. As Prof. Gray says: "Properly regarded, the framework of the laws encourages the development of personality. For the Bantu in South Africa it actively discourages it. No rightless men have ever obeyed laws except



*through fear. And fear always fails to restrain a substantial, often a growing, number of them, sometimes including many of the best."*

In the small urban areas, which are really just market towns surrounded by farins, magistrates' courts have to deal with the same type of statutory offence, the predominating "crimes" being offences against the masters and servants laws, the tax laws, and the pass laws. The crimes against property in these areas are, for the greater part, offences against the stock theft acts. These laws were framed many years ago, and are, of course, to be expected in a stock-farming country where the land is owned by a small percentage of the population; that they are severe will be seen presently. In theory the stock theft laws have no colour bar, but, since the incentive to stock theft for food is much greater with the Native and Coloured people, and since colour prejudice dictates that Natives should be more heavily sentenced than Europeans, the Acts are in practice a good example of class and colour legislation. Farmers are ready to admit that the Native "steals for the pot" while European stock thieves steal for gain; and this is borne out by the fact that of about 6,000 non-Europeans convicted of stock theft in 1937, about 5,000 stole small stock—sheep, goats, poultry. In other words, hunger and the absence of a meat ration on the farms are largely responsible for Native and Coloured stock theft. Of the persons convicted of stock theft in 1937, 2.5% were Europeans, showing that stock theft is predominantly a non-European crime.

Such are the crimes. How are the trials conducted in the magistrates' courts?

Except in the large centres, the majority of prosecutions are undertaken by the police sergeant, one of whose subordinates has investigated the crime. Apart from the fact that the sergeant is not professionally trained, he has a strong incentive to secure a conviction, since the failure of his case will reflect adversely on his department. A professionally trained prosecutor considers it to be his normal duty to reveal *all* the facts in the case, and he has no personal interests which might deter him from withdrawing the case if new facts come to light. The sergeant, however, wants his conviction, and he does not trouble to uncover facts favourable to the accused, especially if the accused is a Native.

The languages of the courts are English and Afrikaans, and only a small percentage of accused Natives have anything but a smattering of words in these European languages; those words have to do with their ordinary working life, and not with legal proceedings. Court interpreters are provided, sometimes European and sometimes Native, but the difficulties of interpreting from a European to a Bantu language can hardly be exaggerated; it is not merely a difference in language, but in fine shades of meaning that have developed from entirely different social environments. A literally correct interpretation may convey the *exact* opposite of what was intended. Africans have a picturesque but long-

winded way of describing events, and overworked magistrates are not as a rule prepared to listen patiently for a possible grain of relevant truth in the chaff of a long and rambling story.

About 80% of the Native accused have no legal aid. This is due largely to poverty; but it is also due to the fact that, particularly in the smaller centres, attorneys are afraid of public opinion and will not undertake "black" cases. In a recent case of anti-police riots at Vereeniging, the local attorneys actually met and decided not to undertake any defence of the accused Natives. A Johannesburg firm of lawyers stepped into the breach, otherwise the accused in a serious case would have been undefended. To the honour of the Bar, this action of the local attorneys did not pass unnoticed, and advocates' societies in different parts of the country passed resolutions declaring that every accused person had the right to the services of an attorney or of counsel in the presentation of his defence. One resolution contained the following passage: "It is the duty of every attorney and of every advocate to whom the privilege of practising in the courts of law is afforded to undertake the defence of the accused person who requires his services without fear and without regard to race or colour." The same resolution expressed approval of the Johannesburg attorneys who had upheld the honour of their profession.

This aversion on the part of local attorneys to defend Natives is particularly strong in the numerous cases of a European employer against a Native worker. Only in cases of murder is an accused person provided with professional assistance at the expense of the State. In Johannesburg a few public-spirited men, under the guidance of the South African Institute of Race Relations, and with the co-operation of the Bar, have inaugurated a scheme of free legal defence for Natives and Europeans who are unable to pay the fees. The Department of Justice is in favour of this scheme, and it is possible that it may be extended; there is, however, very little possibility of its ever affecting more than a very small percentage of the cases that come before the magistrates' courts.

The procedure in a magistrate's court is foreign to the African mind, and is as different from that in his tribal courts as a British court is from a Soviet court. The sharp distinction in European law between a civil and a criminal offence is not found in Bantu law; for example, theft and other crimes against property are, according to Bantu law, civil wrongs for which the guilty person makes restitution and pays compensation. This fact alone alters the nature of the trial. When an accused is tried before a tribal court it is a leisurely and popular affair; the chief gives a general account of the case, the plaintiff states his complaint at great length, and the defendant replies with his version. Questions may be put to the two parties, not only by the judge and his councillors, but by anyone present; and after further witnesses have been called the whole matter is thrown open for public discussion. The councillors, or assessors, then give their individual opinions, and, finally, the chief, or judge, sums

up and gives his verdict; in effect this is a majority opinion of the councillors. Hearsay evidence is admitted, and great importance is attached to the generally known characters of the parties to the suit. Evidence and opinions are given in the usual circumlocutory manner that only a leisurely tribal court would tolerate.

It will be realised that this kind of popular court is radically different from a magistrate's court, where strict rules of procedure and evidence apply and where Native witnesses and accused cannot tell their story as they are accustomed. To begin with, most Natives do not understand the procedure by which they are compelled to enter a plea of guilty or not guilty *before* the trial commences, and many cases of injustice have resulted from this ignorance; by pleading guilty the Native may merely mean that he acknowledges the fact that the prosecutor has said he is guilty. The procedure of cross-examination according to European ideas is one that particularly places the Native accused, conducting his own defence, at a disadvantage; his method of asking questions and of illustrating his remarks by similes is not allowed, since it contravenes the rules of evidence and cross-examination. Lastly, it is notorious that Natives tend to answer "yes" to a direct question. (If you ask a Native: "Is this the road to X?", he will probably say yes; the correct way, if you really want to know how to reach your destination, is to say: "Which is the road to X?".)

It may easily be imagined that a reasonably alert prosecutor or attorney will be able to discredit a Native witness with ease unless the magistrate and the interpreter take great pains to discover the truth. Natives are, in any case, bewildered and frightened by the whole atmosphere of the court and are almost completely ignorant of what is happening to them until sentence is passed.

#### 4. THE PUNISHMENT

In a normal year the chances of going to prison are about thirty times as great for a Native as for a European. In the first place, there are many more statutory offences that rank as "crimes" for the Natives; and, in the second place, the fines inflicted as an alternative to imprisonment are so completely unrelated to the income of the Natives that, to about 50% of them, they are no real alternative. To most Europeans the usual fine of 10s. or £1 is reasonable; to a Native it is often from 50% to 100% of his monthly wage.

Of the 121,505 Native males admitted to gaol in 1937, 105,706 were in prison for periods of from less than seven days to three months; in other words, for breaches of Native labour Regulations, pass laws, masters and servants laws, tax laws, and other statutory regulations. Note also that almost 10% of adult Native males go to prison each year; it is, of course, impossible to say with accuracy what proportion of the

Native male population to-day is acquainted with prison life, but it must be large, since about 85% of Native males admitted to gaol each year are first offenders.

While the fines inflicted for statutory offences are heavy in relation to income, the punishment in the case of stock theft is far heavier, and is an accurate reflection of the high value placed upon certain kinds of property by the landowning class. Here are a few samples of sentences inflicted for stock theft on Natives by magistrates. For stealing eight fowls, six of which were recovered, nine months' hard labour; this sentence was altered on review by the Judge President of the Free State, who remarked that the severity of the sentence "shocked one's feelings of justice". The judge further remarked that, for reasons not apparent to the ordinary citizen, Parliament had seen fit to include the "barndoor fowl" under the definition of "stock". For stealing one chicken (value probably 1s.) a Native in the Eastern Province was sentenced to a fine of £10 or two months' hard labour. In this case, as is usual, the Native was kept in gaol while his past record was being investigated and before sentence was delivered; this took fourteen days, and, in reducing the sentence on review, the judge, Sir Thomas Graham, remarked caustically that, since the accused was not a "fraudulent bankrupt, or a dishonest lawyer, or an illicit diamond buyer", there was no question of his obtaining bail.

For being in possession of and offering for sale a number of diamond fragments (value £2) the magistrate at Senekal, in the Free State, sentenced two Natives to £100 or twelve months' hard labour each. The judge reduced the sentence to £10 or two months. Case upon case can be adduced to show the severity of magisterial sentences on Natives found guilty of petty crimes against property. On review a large number of these sentences are reduced, but, even so, the punishment is out of proportion to the crime. No further cases need be quoted, but it is worth while quoting the remarks of an editorial in the *East London Daily Dispatch* of June 24, 1938. "Previous convictions seem to be the usual excuse for imposing sentences which are obviously out of all proportion to the crime which calls them forth. Thanks to the pass laws and poll tax (the general tax) 'previous convictions' in the case of Natives, especially poor Natives, are generally not hard to find. The magisterial conscience can apparently satisfy itself with these purely technical offences. The Department of Justice, whose job it is to look out for discrepancies and to intervene if necessary to keep the scales of justice even, is apparently unmoved by the unenviable reputation that must inevitably attach to a system where magistrates have continually to be rebuked in the very strongest terms by the judges. Can the people of South Africa really rest content to have their system of justice arraigned at the bar of civilised opinion as a barbarous and iniquitous one?"

The words of the editor are not too strong. They were written in June of 1938. Have the people of South Africa—the Europeans, that is—

“rested content”? Let us see what happened not quite a year later. Under pressure from farmers, the Minister of Justice issued a circular to all public prosecutors instructing them to press for severer sentences in cases of stock theft. The circular contained this sentence: “Although detention in jail may be a sufficient deterrent to a European, the same cannot be said of a Native, and it has been represented that, in the case of a Native, lashes in addition to imprisonment are the only adequate punishment on a conviction of stock theft.” Unfortunately for the Minister of Justice (at that time it was General Smuts) the circular did not remain confidential, and so the matter was raised in Parliament. The reply of the Minister is worth quoting. After saying that the real pity about the circular was that it had been published in the Press, he stressed the seriousness of the position arising from an increase in stock theft. “I am afraid”, he said, “one day we may find ourselves up against lynch laws. Stock thefts are on the increase. If we are to remain a pastoral country we must deal with this question. With a certain section of the community a period in gaol is not punishment. There is no doubt—it does not redound to the credit of this country—that the treatment the ordinary Native or Coloured person gets in gaol is very often better than he gets under normal conditions. Can I or my department be blamed for considering that lashes might be more suitable in certain cases? I do not feel guilty at all, and, although I have been held up to obloquy as a reactionary, I feel that the advice given to prosecutors may help the position. So far it has not done so.”

As a reflection of European public opinion this statement of the Minister of Justice needs no comment. It must, however, be added that the circular itself has apparently not been put into operation, and that the judiciary is not likely to be unduly influenced by it. Since all sentences involving lashes must come up for review, past experience would suggest that the judges are likely to reduce, rather than increase, sentences. The principle of instructing the prosecutor to “press for” heavier sentences is new to South African law, and is likely to be resented by the judiciary as an interference with its independence, which, indeed, it is; the business of the prosecutor is to elicit the true facts of the case, and not to express an opinion on the quantum of the sentence.

In view of what has been said above, it is necessary to point out that the detection of stock theft is not easy. In 1937, for example, 16,852 cases of stock theft (including poultry and domesticated game) were reported; of these, 1,886 were undetected, and in no fewer than 10,274 cases no crime was disclosed. It should also be added that among tribal Natives, who were stock farmers, cattle thieving was regarded as a very serious crime the punishment for which was, in some cases, death or maiming.

## 5. THE PRISONS

"The guiding principles of the Union penal system are to rescue the child from criminal environment and prevent it from becoming a criminal; to build up and supplement in the criminal the elements necessary to prevent a recurrence of crime." In thus describing the penal policy of the country, the *Official Year Book* must be assuming a wide difference between principle and practice, for Mr. Justice Tatham of the Supreme Court recently asserted that once a man found his way into prison he was finished; and a chief magistrate in Johannesburg says that the majority, if not all, of the 30,000 Natives in that city who went to prison were irreparably ruined by the experience.

Let us see how a Native who has failed to pay his tax by the given time is treated. He is put into prison for fourteen days, his head is shorn as an hygienic precaution, he is put into prison uniform, he consorts with hardened criminals, and he is reasonably well fed. But he has been to prison, and a "previous conviction" has been marked up against him; and while most South Africans are convinced that no Native feels any shame at having been in gaol, there is no doubt that the indignity he is made to suffer by being treated as an ordinary criminal is a psychological shock to the law-abiding Bantu.

It is hardly to be expected, of course, that the Department of Prisons will exert much effort to "build up the elements necessary to prevent a recurrence of the crime" with the mass of Africans who serve short sentences. The treatment of those who are sent to prison for six months and more, often for comparatively trivial offences, has been improved in recent years; but it can hardly be described as "redemptive". Lack of accommodation still prevents the effective segregation of first offenders from hardened criminals. This segregation is done for Europeans, but even for them the large majority of country gaols are antiquated, insanitary places. The following extract from the *Official Year Book* may perhaps best serve to indicate the condition of the prisons if we remember that the conditions mentioned in the extract *apply only to Europeans in a few of the big central prisons*. "Gradually the features and methods of penal systems of the past are being abandoned. Single cells are coming more and more into use. The detention of Europeans and Natives in the same wards is now forbidden. The guarding of European prisoners by Coloured warders has been discontinued. The indiscriminate locking up of witnesses for months in gaol lest they might disappear is no longer resorted to. Night schools for adults, popular science books in place of unedifying literature, and an occasional lecture on an elevating subject have now found a permanent place in the prison system." (Readers of Macartney's *Walls have Mouths* will recoil at the "elevating subject".)

On the other hand, here is a picture painted (in 1939) by Dr. Krause, former Judge President of the Free State, a man with an almost unrivalled

experience of the administration of justice in South Africa and with expert knowledge on prisons and prison administration. He says: "In our prisons to-day you will still hear the clank of leg-irons, you will still be startled by the cries of distress and pain of those who are tied to the triangle, and you will observe one of your fellow creatures, half starved, walking up and down a dark and gloomy isolation cell, harbouring thoughts of revenge or despair". He described the whole prison system in South Africa as "barbarous". And he added that at least 10% of the Natives executed for murder were innocent of that crime.

There is one more extract from the *Official Year Book* that deserves attention. The official who compiled the review of prisons must have been indulging in the tricky business of prophecy when he wrote: "As regards the Native the road camp has been created, so that for venial offences against the Pass Laws, the Tax Law, or the Masters and Servants Law he goes direct from court to camp and never enters goal." The Minister of Finance, for one, would appear not to believe this official statement in the *Year Book* of his Government, for, as we saw, he was recently responsible for a law by which "venial offenders against the Tax Law" might avoid going to gaol by working for farmers. The reader is quite safe in sharing the Minister's unbelief.

#### 6. THE SUPREME COURT AND THE JURY

In an earlier section of this chapter it was stated that the Supreme Court in South Africa had an honourable record but that the judges could go neither beyond the law nor too far ahead of European public opinion. The influence of the Bench in ameliorating harsh conditions has been great, and examples have been quoted of reductions in severe magisterial sentences. One of the handicaps under which the bench labours in administering justice is the jury system. Since the accused may elect to be tried by a judge without jury, no Native need suffer from this form of prejudice; but even that does not prevent injustice when the accused is a European charged with an offence against the non-European. It is practically impossible, in these cases, to get a jury to convict, and, so flagrant were the acquittals of white men by white juries, that the law was amended in 1935 to give the Minister power to direct that certain black-and-white cases should be tried without a jury. The necessity for the amendment is a measure of the extent of popular colour prejudice; and the general opinion of the jury system may be gathered from the popular saying that if you are guilty, choose a jury.

Since the jury consists of Europeans only, any case in which a Native is involved against a European constitutes a violation of the "trial by a man's peers" theory; Europeans are the self-confessed superiors of the Native. In the matter of evidence juries are predisposed to accept that of a European witness and to assume that the Native is lying, particularly where his evidence conflicts with, or is unfavourable to, the white man.

The trial of a Native in the Supreme Court on a serious charge is conducted thoroughly and without prejudice by the large majority of judges, and it is safe to assume that, in the question of deciding guilt, there is not much more danger of a miscarriage of justice than there is in the case of a European. Judges are on the alert to avoid any suspicion that a Native does not receive a fair trial in the highest court in the land, and they take pains to secure that the natural and unnatural handicaps under which a Native in court may labour do not prejudice his case. It must be added that, up till the present, the Supreme Court has not been seriously faced with cases in which the authority of the ruling class has been challenged. That will, of course, be the real test of the independence of the Bench. Enlightened self-interest on the part of judges and legislators may lead to considerable amelioration of the penal system, and the evidence is that the judges are undoubtedly on the side of liberal reforms; but historical analogy does not warrant the assumption that the independence of the judiciary will stand the strain of a real class struggle.

#### 7. UNEQUAL JUSTICE

While the finding of facts in a Native or in a European trial is carried out with scrupulous care and with a welcome absence of colour prejudice, the sentences delivered are far from equal. Even here there are signs that the judges, backed by a small but alert liberal opinion, are removing some of the worst inequalities. The following examples will show, however, that the traditional view of the relative value of an African and a European life is still very much a part of the judicial system of South Africa, a system that, however liberal the occupants of the Bench may be, is based on class and colour distinctions. In January 1939 a farmer was brought before the periodical magistrate's court on a charge of assault on a Native employee. The Native had absented himself from work for five days, and on his return the employer had felled him to the ground with three blows and then kicked him thrice; the medical evidence was that the Native had been brought to the doctor in a state of collapse and was permanently injured. The magistrate accepted the employer's word that he had not intended to injure the Native, but added that he must not take the law into his own hands. The sentence was—£2 or seven days.

The second example is from the Supreme Court on circuit in April 1939. Three European farmers were found guilty of culpable homicide. A Native employee had been "insolent", and the employer had knocked him down; when he showed signs of defending himself the employer had administered a flogging with a hose-pipe. Not content with this, since the Native "showed no signs of repentance", two other Europeans held the victim down while the employer gave him another flogging, after which the Native "apologised for his insolence". Three hours later he died, and the medical evidence was that he was suffering from pneumonia at the



time the flogging was administered. The doctor said that, until he had examined the deceased, he had not thought it possible that such severe injuries could be inflicted with a hose-pipe. The judge, in passing sentence, said the flogging was "brutal", and that it was the duty of Europeans "who were in the position of guardians over the Natives to act in an exemplary manner". The sentence was, for the chief accused, three years' hard labour *suspended for three years* and a fine of £250, or a further eighteen months' hard labour; the two other accused were each sentenced to £150 or one years' hard labour. They were all given four days in which to find the money. None of them went to gaol. The headline comment of a Nationalist paper on this sentence was: "Three Farmers Heavily Punished". Both the sentence and the comment are indicative of public opinion on these matters. Had the position been reversed, and had it been a Native accused, he would, without the least doubt, have been sentenced to death.

Examples of unequal sentences may be easily multiplied, but there is no point in doing so. At the same time, it is necessary to reply in advance to those who scornfully say that a few examples of injustice do not prove a case, and that there are thousands of cases handled every year by the courts in which substantial justice is done to the Native. Such arguments are really beside the point, since the effect of a few flagrantly unequal sentences is enough, in the Native mind, to balance thousands where justice is done. To the African it is sentences such as those quoted that matter, and the fact that such cases are on record is sufficient indictment of the administration of justice. If justice was harsh for all alike; if, for example, the antiquated stock theft laws were applied equally to black and white; then a few examples of harsh sentences could be attributed to the personality of the individual judge or magistrate. But a consistent record of unequal sentences shows that it is no individual matter, but rather one of class.

A warning should be given to readers who are not familiar with South African conditions. In the two examples just quoted the culprits were farmers, and the English urban Press commented in strong liberal vein on the iniquity of the sentences; but the urban liberals forget that comparable sentences are inflicted in the interests of the ruling class, whatever its home language, in industrial and mining undertakings. It is fashionable for liberals to blame the farmers for demanding stiffer sentences for Natives than for Europeans; and the tendency is to single out the Afrikaner as the worst offender. Those readers who are familiar with British rule in Egypt, in Kenya, and in India, will not be misled by this. Class oppression is not a monopoly of one race or colour. If, in the present economic conditions, rural opinion is less liberal than urban, it is a difference in degree, not in kind. While there are strong influences at work to lessen the injustice to Natives, the fundamental injustice will obviously persist as long as class exploitation remains.

## 8. YOUNG OFFENDERS

Most juvenile delinquents, both European and Bantu, are urban products. For the Bantu, the appalling slum conditions under which they live in the large towns, the lack of real incentives towards developing a pride of citizenship, the grinding poverty, the ignorance due to lack of educational facilities, the absence of proper family life due to decay of Bantu customs, and, finally, the lack of social amenities, all drive the young African to law-breaking. Competent authorities are of the opinion that Native children are no more prone to evil-doing than European children; low family wages are the root cause of crimes against property, and at the Diepkloof Reformatory for Natives about 80% of the boys in one year were guilty of theft. In the large urban areas there is accommodation at school for less than 50% of the Native children of school-going age, and about 65% of Native children admitted to reformatories and other institutions are illiterate. A large proportion—probably about 30%—of the “crimes” committed by Native juveniles are not crimes for Europeans, and it is interesting to note that inability to pay tax is a “crime” for a Native at the age of eighteen, while Europeans are potential tax-payers only at twenty-one. Add to this that 80% of Native juvenile delinquency occurs between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, and the inference is obvious. It is no wonder that Natives grow up in fear of, but not with respect for, the law. Before they are at an age which Europeans consider legal they have experience of the law, not because they are criminals, but because of one of the many conditions under which they live.

The Children's Act of 1937 was a real attempt to reform the whole system of dealing with juvenile offenders. Special Juvenile Courts were set up in the larger centres, welfare officers were appointed to deal with delinquents, and, generally, the Act deserved the name of Children's Charter in so far as it affects Europeans. Though there is no colour bar in the Act, its administration leaves most of the advantages to the Europeans. Reformatory accommodation, for example, is hopelessly overcrowded for Native delinquents, who, though they far outnumber the Europeans, have fewer institutions. The result is that many Native juveniles still go to prison. Also a number of European charity organisations co-operate with the Department of Education in dealing with neglected European children and with juvenile offenders; and, as yet, few of these organisations extend their activities to non-Europeans.

## 9. THE POLICE

The use of the police force as an instrument of the class that employs it is, of course, a common enough phenomenon in all countries, and we need only refer to the history of the working-class movements in England,

Europe, and America to realise that it is no new thing invented by the Fascists. South Africa is different in this respect only by reason of the fact that the vast majority of the working-class belongs to a different race and colour from the ruling class, and, so far, there has been no serious mass movement among the Native workers. The clash of colour and of class has been confined, therefore, almost entirely to individuals, and the use of the police force as an instrument for the suppression of the working class has been limited for want of opportunity. In those few cases where bodies of Natives have "rioted", or struck work illegally, the police authorities have shown more than sufficient zeal in suppressing incipient revolution.

In the country districts the police have to deal largely with offences against masters, against the pass laws, and with stock theft. A policeman called out to the European farm on a suspected case of stock theft is just as anxious to obtain a conviction as is the owner of the stock. He meets the farmer socially, hears the whole story from him, and then proceeds to interrogate the accused, usually in the presence of his employer. These interrogations are often highly irregular, and not infrequently witnesses and accused are compelled by force to give the desired evidence that will secure a conviction. An accused Native is ignorant of his legal rights, and the police fail to inform him that he is not legally compelled to make a statement, or that such a statement may be used in evidence against him. There are cases where extreme violence has been used by the farmer and the policeman, acting in concert, to induce a confession; the courts are, however, vigilant to punish proved cases of assault by police officials and to refuse to accept evidence where third-degree methods are suspected. The difficulty is to prove police assault, and the records show that there are many more accusations of assault than proved cases.

In the big urban centres the police are concerned largely with local pass laws, petty theft, drunkenness, illicit liquor traffic, and municipal regulations. It is only in the four or five biggest towns that serious crimes of violence are at all common. The Native is a law-abiding individual except where crowded urban slum conditions and sheer poverty lead to the formation of gangs of criminals who prey on the whole community, white and black.

Police methods in the largest towns are a subject of frequent complaint. In Johannesburg, for example, the pick-up van system operates. This is a cruising police motor van that picks up any Natives without the proper passes and takes them straight to the charge office. Many Johannesburg Natives state that the police tear up their passes after arrest so as to be sure of a conviction; whether this is true or not it is difficult to say, but it is certain that many Natives keep duplicate passes for such emergencies. The treatment of arrested Natives is far from gentle; they are shoved and pulled instead of being allowed to walk naturally, and attempted explanations are frequently treated as insolence. If a man is wrongfully

arrested on a Saturday night he may spend the week-end in gaol and receive no compensation when his case is dismissed on Monday morning. It must, of course, be admitted that the task of the police on the Witwatersrand is no easy one; there are parts of the slum areas of the Rand where policemen dare not go singly.

It has been officially denied on various occasions that promotion in the police force depends on the number of arrests that lead to a conviction. Accepting this denial at its face value, it may yet be permitted to observe that promotion depends on zeal, and the fairly obvious index of zeal is the number of arrests. In one Johannesburg police office a sort of honours list of the number of arrests attributed to each policeman was posted up, and those with fewest arrests to their credit were encouraged to do better next week. The discovery of this list by a journalist led to considerable criticism against police methods, and a good deal of official ingenuity was exercised in explaining the list away. As usual in such matters, the affair was soon forgotten, and there is no evidence of improved methods.

Native policemen are much used in South Africa, and, as a general rule, Natives foreign to the area in which they are to serve are selected. On the whole, Natives dislike African policemen even more than they do the European officers, and that is saying a good deal.

Viewed from a non-European standpoint, the police force in South Africa is not so much a protecting as a prosecuting and persecuting force that induces fear and hatred, but no respect. Children grow up fearing the policeman, and rightly so; for as they become youths the chances are big that they will come up against him as the representative of an administration that differentiates heavily against people who are not Europeans. The most innocent and law-abiding Native has a lurking fear that he may be required by the police, and the cumulative effect of this on the Bantu population, particularly in the urban areas, is great.

There are, of course, a number of police officers who treat the African as they would treat a European; but when we consider the environment and educational forces that mould the average South African policeman it is not surprising that, as a force, the police fall considerably short of the ideal. Growing up in a country like South Africa means, for a European, that from the time that he can remember, Natives are the inferiors of Europeans and are to be treated as such. Like other South Africans, the policeman grows up with this idea of superiority; the Bantu is the inferior whose word and action are suspect; he must be kept in his place, and any questioning of this position on the part of the Native casts a doubt on the inherent superiority of the white man; as such it must be instantly checked, with violence if necessary. So ingrained is this habit of thought that the policeman never feels that he will shock European public opinion by a lack of leniency, or even of humanity, towards the Native. Public opinion does not restrain the police force in its dealings with non-Europeans. The general result is that Natives neither expect nor receive

just treatment at the hands of the police. It would be childish to expect anything else.

## 10. CONCLUSION

The point of this chapter, and, indeed, of this book, will be lost if readers are left to imagine that South Africans of European descent are a particularly bad set of individuals who take a sadistic pleasure in ill-treating the Natives. It is therefore necessary to point out that what is true of South Africa is, with certain local differences, true of Britain, of the United States, and of any country where capitalist production is virtually unchecked. In all these countries justice is poisoned at its source, and the lower down the stream you go the less pure is the water. In South Africa, as elsewhere, a considerable body of liberal opinion is fighting hard for justice, and this liberal opinion frequently has the support of the best officials in the public service. These people are actuated by two motives. In the first place, they are just, and hate injustice. In the second place, they fear the devastating effect on the Native mind of continued injustice. Some of them are beginning to realise that the thing goes even deeper than that, and that a country that can suppress the majority of its citizens on the ground of colour is a country ripe for a Fascism under which anybody may be suppressed on any grounds or on no grounds at all. The realisation of this danger will lend strength to the liberals; but unless it drives them to the logical conclusion of socialism, they will fail, however gallantly they may fight. When the administration of justice is rooted in capitalism and colour prejudice it cannot avoid being the instrument by which the dominating class and colour rule over the rest.

## CHAPTER XI

### EDUCATION

#### 1. "THE STATE SCHOOLS RE-OPEN TO-DAY"

THE HEADING to this paragraph is a news item<sup>6</sup> that appears in the Press at the appropriate times, and it is instructive to examine what it means to the various classes living in the South African State.

To the Europeans it means that practically all children between the ages of seven and sixteen, and a large proportion over sixteen, will return to school to continue the education that is compulsory and largely free. If the parents are too poor to provide transport or books, the State will pay even for those; and an elaborate system of bursaries and scholarships assists those children whose parents wish them to continue beyond the standard laid down by law. The schools to which the children will return

are well equipped with classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and playgrounds, and are staffed by professionally trained men and women at the rate of about one to every twenty-two pupils. The State spends about £20 a year on every European pupil at school; whether it receives good value for its money is another question.

To the non-European population the reopening of the "State" schools means something very different. Attendance is neither compulsory nor, except in the Cape Province, free. Poverty is an immediate bar, and about seven out of every ten coloured and Asiatic children are at school, while at most three out of eleven Bantu children receive any schooling at all. The schools are, of course, entirely separate, and non-European children may not attend European schools; a small proportion of coloured parents are sufficiently European in appearance to gain the coveted access for their children to European schools, but it is a question of bluffing their way in by such methods as keeping the darker of the two parents out of the way when the principal of the school has to be interviewed. School committees and principals are becoming more vigilant in this matter, and of recent years the position has hardened, so that it is increasingly difficult for coloured children to slip unobtrusively into the educational heaven of the white schools. Native schools are, with a few exceptions, wretchedly equipped, and there is an almost complete absence of the accessories to modern education. The African teachers are, for the major part, not professionally trained and of a low academic standard. Those few who have obtained a degree and professional certificate find themselves drawing a salary of about one-third that of their similarly qualified European colleagues. The non-European schools are under-staffed, there being about forty-four pupils per teacher. The State spends about £3 per year on every non-European pupil at school.

The following official figures give a rough idea of the educational position.

TABLE XXVII.  
*School Statistics (1936).*  
(In Round Numbers)

Race.	Population.	No. of schools.	No. of pupils.	No. of teachers.	State expenditure.
European .	2,000,000	4,600	375,000	17,000	£7,400,000
Coloured and Asiatic .	900,000	1,000	141,000	} 12,000	£1,500,000
Bantu .	6,500,000	3,500	360,000		

There is, thus, one school for every 430 Europeans in the country, one for every 900 Coloured and Asiatics, and one for every 1,850 Africans;

and the difference in quality and quantity of equipment, buildings, and other educational accessories between European and non-European schools may roughly be measured by the difference between £20 and £3, the sums per pupil spent annually by the State. Further, the figures quoted in the last column of Table XXVII do not include capital expenditure, so that the actual difference is much greater than the figure for annual expenditure reveals.

## 2. CONTROL AND FINANCE

European schools are, for the most part, non-sectarian; Native schools are practically all denominational. Since the 18th century mission societies in South Africa have laboured among non-Europeans, and the present education system is largely the result of the efforts of the Christian Churches. It is only in comparatively recent decades that European Governments have assumed part of the responsibility for educating their African citizens, and even then, as we shall see, the principle of making the Native pay for what he gets has relieved the European taxpayer of the financial obligations connected with this vital social service. All over southern Africa missionaries have devoted their lives and the resources of their societies to the education of the African. They have fought superstition in all its dark and cruel aspects; they have tried to substitute medicine for witchcraft; they have reduced Bantu languages to writing; they have taught the Africans better modes of life and better methods of work. And all this has been done in the teeth of fierce opposition from European employers of labour, who regarded mission stations as resorts for idlers and loafers, who resented the "spoiling" of the Native. It is easy to criticise the work of the missionaries, but the faults are as nothing when balanced against the progress that has been achieved against such heavy odds. That the progress has been slow cannot fairly be laid at the door of the mission societies that had to work with inadequate means. The example of the U.S.S.R. has shown how the educational level of a people may be raised in one generation when the resources of the State are behind the effort; in South Africa the resources of the State have, when it came to the education of the majority of its inhabitants, been largely withheld.

Historically, therefore, the educational system of the African has been built up and controlled by the Christian Churches with very little aid from the Government, and that control persists to the present time. For the education of the Natives is no State education, but State-aided education. Control of Native education rests with the provincial administration, while the individual school is managed for the education departments by a missionary or by a small committee responsible for recommending teachers for appointment or dismissal by the department. Salaries are paid by the State, but, in contrast to European education, buildings and equipment must be provided by the mission society re-

sponsible for the school. Since 1938 the Government has agreed to hire buildings from mission societies at a rate intended to cover interest and redemption on the loans made to erect the buildings; this practice has encouraged some of the more progressive municipalities to raise loans for the erection of school buildings, and mission societies have been able to borrow money more easily for the same purpose. European and coloured education is financed from general revenue by grants, on a *per capita* basis, made to the provincial authorities by the Union Government.

The financing of Native education is peculiar. In 1922 the Union Government took over the financial responsibility for Native education from the Provincial Councils, and estimated the amount spent in that year in the four provinces at £340,000. (Financial responsibility does not, of course, mean *full* financial responsibility for all the needs of Native education; it means responsibility for paying the very meagre grants-in-aid that were, up till that time, paid by the provinces.) It was therefore decided that this sum, together with a proportion of the amount raised in direct taxation of the Native—the general tax—should be allocated to Native education. The basic amount spent is thus calculated on the educational needs of twenty years ago, and very little account is taken of the expanding needs of education. The principle of allocating a portion of the general tax is the old one of making the Natives pay, a principle conspicuously and rightly absent in the financing of European education. It has an additional advantage from the European taxpayers' point of view of providing a so-called unanswerable argument against any reduction of the heavy general tax; Europeans engaged in Native work are afraid to support petitions for the abolition or reduction of what they fully realise is an iniquitous tax because they also realise the dependence of their work on part of the proceeds of that tax.

In 1935-36 an authoritative Government Committee on Native Education issued an excellent report on the whole field of Native education, and unanimously advised the Government to place its control directly under the Union Education Department; the Natives' Representative Council and a large number of Native welfare societies endorsed this view, but the reaction of the Government has been to agree to central control, but not under the Education Department. Native education must be controlled by the Native Affairs Department. In 1939, accordingly, the Government proposed to centralise Native education under the Native Affairs Department; at the same time it proposed, for the future, to pay the whole of the general tax into the Native Trust Fund, which was thereafter to be solely responsible for Native education; the famous £340,000 block grant from general revenue would now cease, and Parliament would be able, finally, to wash its hands of the whole question of financing Native education. What the Native receives by way of education will be paid for wholly out of what he himself subscribes to the general tax.



This scheme is supported by specious arguments that Native education will actually, at the moment, receive about £180,000 more a year, and that it will be controlled by a department of officials who "know" the Native. In practice the policy will mean that the hope of ever persuading European public opinion to sanction an increased expenditure on Native education from general revenue will dwindle; the social and economic separation of Native and European education will be complete, and that of the Natives will be tied for ever to the proceeds of direct Native taxation. Further, the officials of the Department of Native Affairs are administrative officials who are not trained to the needs of Native education; they are rightly associated in the African mind with the administration of law and order and with the collection of taxes. The Department already has more work than it can accomplish, and the result of placing education in its hands will be that education itself will become merely a subordinate part of general Native policy; this tendency will be strengthened by the fact that the Minister of Native Affairs is advised by the Native Affairs Commission, a body of men who are appointed because of their sympathy with official Native policy. The present Native Affairs Commission has already supplied ample evidence that, in its view, Native education should be subordinated to Government Administrative policy.

The Government proposals just outlined were prevented from coming into force immediately by the objections of one province, Natal; but it is anticipated that these objections will be overcome in the near future, and so the Department of Native Affairs will have acquired yet another function. The fact that progressive Bantu and European opinion is almost unanimously opposed to the policy will not deter a South African Government from putting it into effect; the policy is nicely in tune with the general policy of throwing the full financial responsibility for Native social services on to the Natives themselves. South African Governments have little to learn from other capitalist Governments. An accident of colour enables them to do openly what other Governments have to disguise by methods of regressive taxation.

### 3. THE STANDARD OF EDUCATION

For the convenience of readers unacquainted with South African terminology it should be explained that grades or forms are known in the Union as standards, and a comparison with the reader's own local conditions may be made by reference to the normal age for any standard. There are, in the primary (or elementary) schools, two sub-standards and six standards, and the normal age for a European child in standard one is eight years. Each standard takes one year to pass, so that the European child will reach the secondary school at the age of thirteen or fourteen. Here he undergoes a four-year course, ending in a public examination known as matriculation, the culmination of the school course

and the entrance to the universities and to the professions. For the sake of further comparison, the matriculation examination is roughly equivalent to the London Matriculation, and is accepted as such by British universities.

Native education is similar in form to the European system, and the same subjects are taught in the primary schools; up till standard IV the medium used is that of a Bantu language, and after that it is principally English. Owing chiefly to poverty and its attendant environmental evils, the normal Bantu age for any particular standard is probably three years higher than for Europeans; also, due largely to the same causes, the actual standard achieved by African pupils in, say, standard III, is considerably lower than that in an equivalent European school. The general standard of Bantu education may be judged from the fact that of the 20% of children of a school-going age who are at school, about 75% are in standard II or below, and only about 3% are in standard VI; for Europeans the figures are 30% and 10%. The vast majority of Native pupils never reach a higher standard than standard II; about one-sixth per cent of the Natives of a school-going age reach the secondary school, while 14% of European children are in secondary schools. Put another way one Native child in every 600 receives an education beyond the primary school.

Much heat and little light are engendered in South Africa and elsewhere by discussions on "the type of education that should be given to the Native". The majority of Europeans either consider schools unnecessary or else want as little book-learning as possible for the Africans. Many would agree to their learning to read the Bible, but nothing more. Others find the ability to read and write an asset in their employees, but there the matter must rest. Educational authorities themselves, Bantu and European, are divided. Some desire greater emphasis to be laid on handicrafts than on academic subjects; others favour a more liberal and less strictly utilitarian system. The question is not an easy one to answer, and anyone who has had anything to do with Native education is bound to feel that the system and the content of education in European schools require severe modification when applied to the mass of the Bantu. Not the least unfortunate result of the Europeanising of South Africa has been the growth of a fixed idea among Africans that the European system of education is the best possible and that any deviation from it is likely to be second-rate. Economically the Bantu finds that advance lies along the road of European education, and he will not tolerate any inferior brand. Natives want to pass the same examinations as the Europeans, whether the courses involved suit their needs or not; and, having passed those examinations, they not unnaturally conclude that what is good for them is good for their race. The result is that a great deal of Bantu culture is being smothered under an alien educational system. European education, in any case, is more of a machine. han anything else, and

mass-production methods are applied indiscriminately; so that one may rightly speak of men and women who have survived their education. When this system is applied to the Bantu the results are far from happy; but nothing much can be done about it, since the Africans themselves are opposed to a qualitative change—nothing, that is, except a vigorous nationalist African movement based on socialist principles.

A word must be said about the educability of the African. In recent years all kinds of pseudo-scientific tests have been applied to show that the Bantu has not the same brain-capacity as the European, that he is imitative but not original, and that he stops developing sooner than the European. While it would be unfair to say that all these tests were made by interested people, it remains true that they were all made by Europeans, and that some of the most important factors, such as environment, are not measurable by ordinary psychological and mechanical tests. Practical experience points to the conclusion that there are no essential differences in this respect between Europeans and Africans.

On one point there is no argument: the desire of the Bantu for education. In recent years the desire has grown rapidly, and, as the figures quoted in this chapter have shown, far outruns the supply of schools and teachers available with the small funds at the disposal of the departments.

#### 4. THE TEACHER

There are twenty-six teacher-training schools for Natives in South Africa, with an average total roll of about 3,500 pupils. These schools are modelled on the European pattern, but they have to train the future teachers to deal with problems arising from the lack of essential equipment that do not occur in European schools. The academic standard achieved by the training-schools is considerably lower than for European schools, but is high in relation to the mass of the population.

Teachers' salaries vary from £3 a month for unqualified men to £25 a month for the very few with full academic and professional qualifications; the great majority receive round about £5 10s. a month. With small exceptions, there are no pension rights attached to these salaries. The salary scales for Europeans with equivalent qualifications are from three to four times as large and carry pensions.

Neither European nor African teachers may take an active part in politics, but the rule is more strictly applied in the case of Africans. European teachers may obtain permission to stand for municipal elections, but Bantu teachers in urban areas are not allowed to interfere in local politics.

#### 5. HIGHER EDUCATION

There are, in South Africa, five universities: Stellenbosch, Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg, and the University of South Africa, with five constituent colleges at Bloemfontein, Pietermaritzburg, Wellington,

Grahamstown, and Potchefstroom. At none of these institutions is there a legal colour bar, but, with a few solitary exceptions at Cape Town and Johannesburg, no non-European students are admitted.

There is, at Fort Hare in the Cape Province, a university college for non-Europeans where Indians, Coloureds, and Bantu are prepared for the University of South Africa degree examinations. This college is staffed largely by highly qualified Europeans, but two African graduates are on the lecturing staff. Since its foundation in 1916 about ninety non-Europeans have graduated from the College, some of them gaining high distinction in the final examination. The examinations are the same as those written by European students in the other constituent colleges of the University.

Graduates from Fort Hare are absorbed into the teaching profession, the Civil Service, and the Church; there are a few African lawyers, but the social colour bars against their practising are too strong to encourage Natives to study law. Until recently Natives could not be trained as doctors in South Africa, and the eight doctors who are now practising were all trained overseas. (It is only in the last two decades that Europeans have been able to qualify medically in South Africa; formerly they, too, had to study medicine overseas.) A scheme has recently been started by which Natives can train as near-doctors (Medical Aids is the official term) at Fort Hare; they will be employed in the Reserves where medical facilities are very poor. The professions in South Africa naturally view with alarm any proposal to train Natives professionally, since the European monopoly would be threatened; there are, of course, a number of exceptions to this rule, and some outstanding professional men are in favour of full training facilities for all.

## 6. THE EDUCATED AFRICAN

It would be surprising if, under the conditions described in the previous paragraphs, we were to find a large educated class among the Natives. The vast mass of them are illiterate, and the very small proportion that has achieved an education against enormous odds forms a middle-class of rather lonely men and women who are scorned by the majority of Europeans and themselves rather look down on the uneducated mass of their own race. They are liberal in outlook and resentfully opposed to European government; but they are not prepared to lead the mass of the working class or to jeopardise their hard-won positions by much opposition to the constituted authority. Their present status is a vested interest to be defended, and it is unlikely that this class will ultimately supply the real leaders of the Africans. From the point of view of most Europeans this is as it should be.

## 7. OTHER EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES

In addition to the ordinary academic schools there are industrial schools for Natives, where they are trained to various trades. Since there is little scope in the poverty-stricken Reserves for skilled artisans, they naturally migrate to the European urban areas, where the practice of their trade is restricted by the Trade Unions and by colour-bar laws. In the locations, however, they are able to make a reasonable living, though even there the really big jobs in the building trade, for example, are given to Europeans.

Apart from formal education, there are a host of educative agencies at work, more particularly in urban areas, exerting a powerful influence on Native life. The very contact with European civilisation is a daily education to the African. He has to adapt his life to new ways and habits, and he all too readily copies the superficial manners of his European master. Those are, as he sees it, the manners that accompany mastership, and are therefore worthy of emulation. The effect is, frequently, to destroy the natural manners of the African.

Cinemas in the locations, newspapers, European-run social-welfare societies, the factories—all these are constantly at work making impressions on the African's mind. These impressions cannot be accurately measured, but the conclusion seems inevitable that their effect will finally be to reduce the superficial differences between the European and the non-European, and, probably, to sharpen racial antagonism. That antagonism will not be less sharp because the Europeans have withheld so much from the non-Europeans; the greater the oppression the greater will be the ultimate clash.

A natural result of leaving such a large proportion of the Native population to acquire its "education" by means other than the formal, disciplined routine of an educational system, is the growth of juvenile delinquency and gangsterdom. This is particularly noticeable in the large urban centres, and the European superintendents of locations are continually stressing the fact that young hooligans grow up into potential criminals. In the Reserves the natural tribal education of young children has not yet quite broken down; but in the urban areas family and tribal discipline has been practically destroyed, and the educational authorities have not the funds to cope with the situation. It is frequently said that the Europeans are imposing an alien culture on the Bantu. The trouble is, rather, that they are destroying Bantu culture and imposing no real culture in its place. Primitive Bantu culture is, in any case, doomed to disappear, and self-interest alone would dictate that something effective and organised should be substituted; as long, however, as South Africa is interested in the African as an unskilled worker only, this will not happen.

## 8. EUROPEAN OPINION ON NATIVE EDUCATION

Only a small minority of Europeans in the Union are really convinced of the need for Native education. The mass of the population is prepared to tolerate it provided it is unobtrusive and involves no financial burden on the European taxpayer. At the other end of the scale, a small minority is actively and fundamentally opposed to any education for the Native. That is the present position, and within that framework Native education has until now been growing painfully and slowly. The stage has been reached, however, where the European mass is beginning to feel its economic position threatened by Native advance, and the old cry that the schools are unfitting the Natives for work—which means work for the Europeans—is once more being raised. It is this rumbling of public opinion that is partly responsible for the present policy of shunting social services for Natives on to the Native Trust Fund. The growth of poor whiteness is alarming the public, and even a comparatively liberal paper recently stated that “the overwhelming difficulty” in the situation was that, while a large section of the European population was going backward, there was a slow but general advance of the Native people. The article concluded by an appeal for European political unity in the interests of self-preservation. Most Europeans connect European regression with Native progress, and, as economic conditions under capitalism deteriorate—the real cause of European regression—so will the dominant race tend to defend its position by restricting Native advance. At the same time, Native labour is the indispensable foundation of the South African economic structure, and the capitalist class will exert its influence and power to protect this principal item of profit, at the expense, if need be, of the poorest Europeans, and even of the European skilled worker. A battle between the exploiting industrialists and the exploiting landowner will ensue; in fact, the present-day political tendencies seem to indicate that battle has already been joined. The position is not dissimilar to that which prevailed in England during the latter half of the 19th century; and out of the struggle between industrialism and landed capitalism the Native worker will probably extract a certain amount of incidental benefit.

## 9. RELIGION AND THE CHURCHES

The Christian Churches have had, and still have, a profound influence on Native education in South Africa, and no discussion on the subject can be complete without an analysis of the general attitude of the different churches towards the Native, and, in particular, towards Native education.

Before dealing with this, however, it is as well to clear the ground by a reference to the host of separatist Native churches that have sprung up

in the Union. There are about 350 of these institutions, ranging from the well-established African Methodist Episcopal Church, with a large membership, to innumerable sects such as the Afro-Athlican Constructive Gaathly and the Apostolic Church in Zion Amen. (These names really do exist.) Many of the names in the list of 350 contain such words as African, Native, and National, or else the name of a tribe, and the whole separatist movement represents an ill-defined and possibly unconscious attempt at an African nationalism. The actual reasons for the establishment of separatist Native churches are frequently trivial. The dismissal of an ambitious non-conforming Native member by his European superiors, the irksomeness of the discipline of the Christian Churches, the possibility of attaining to a position of trust among a small following, or the desire for the comparative wealth and safety of a career in "the Church", are all motives for the separatist movement; and a large number of the churches founded in this way are Christian merely in name. But throughout the movement there is an undercurrent of impatience at European control and a desire for independence in the religious sphere. The movement has never been seriously revolutionary, and is unlikely to become so. It is perhaps worth adding that among Afrikaans-speaking South Africans there is, for entirely different reasons, a tendency towards separatism, and many fancy religions find adherents among the more ignorant Afrikaners.

The main European Christian Churches in South Africa, each with its mission to the Natives, may for our present purpose be divided into the English-speaking and the Afrikaans-speaking churches. The reader is warned, however, that there are a host of doctrinal and dogmatic differences between all the churches, and that these differences are perpetuated in the Native missions; in ignoring, for the present purpose, these differences, there is no intention of confusing the issue. Further, though we speak of English and Afrikaans churches, the great majority of services for the Africans are conducted through the medium of a Bantu language.

Broadly speaking, the English churches accept a policy of ultimate equality between the races; they are more liberal in their educational policy, and are wholeheartedly in favour of higher education. They do not object to mixed congregations, but, as a matter of present social policy, they do not desire to force the pace. Priests and ministers of these churches are among the most active members of societies for promoting Native welfare; many of them have intimate and profound knowledge of Native languages, customs, and present-day conditions, and are not afraid to uncover unpleasant facts. In educational policy they act on the principle that Native education must not be limited or confined in the interests of the employers.

The Afrikaans-speaking churches, of which the most important is the largest church in the Union, the Dutch Reformed Church, have a much

longer tradition in South Africa than the English-speaking churches, and they are deeply imbued with Afrikaner nationalist traditions. The emphasis of these churches has always been on the white, rather than on the black, people. In the days of the Great Trek, a century ago, the Dutch Reformed Church, after a preliminary frown on the Trek, followed it up, and wove itself deeply into the life of the Calvinist Boers. The early Trekker States had to fight against the Bantu, and the Church was, naturally, associated with these wars. The English churches, on the other hand, came into the country as part of the conquering race, and were always critical of the habits and principles of the conquered Boers. It is true that the Afrikaans churches did mission work among the Native tribes, but they confined themselves largely, in the earlier stages at any rate, to religion; and they, in turn, were critical of the methods of the conquering newcomers. It is noteworthy that the Dutch Reformed Church missions to tribes beyond the borders of the Union—to Nyasaland and Rhodesia, for example—have always been more liberal and progressive than their home missions; this is due to the fact that, at home, the Church was so closely identified with the State and with the economic welfare of its own European members that a progressive and liberal policy would have been unnatural. It is probable that the English churches themselves were more liberal in South Africa than they were in England.

Historically, then, the Boer churches were closely identified with the Boer States; as such, they would not tolerate equality between black and white in either State or Church. They associated the conquest of their Republics by Britain with the English churches and missions, and they were naturally suspicious of the conquerors. The anti-British nationalism of the Boers permeated their churches, while the English churches condemned the Boers as oppressors of the Native. Finally, the Bantu, occupying the same position in relation to the Boers as the latter did to the British, associated the Afrikaans churches with oppression and the English churches with liberty.

Since Union there has been a steady growth of poor whites, and the big majority of these are Afrikaners. The Afrikaans churches have, therefore, been faced with a vast problem of physical, economic, and spiritual deterioration among their own people, a problem that did not really concern the English churches intimately because their members were not involved. Since, in any case, the Afrikaner tended to associate European deterioration with Bantu progress, the Afrikaans churches concentrated on the poor white problem; and mission and education work among Natives in the Union met with strong opposition from many Afrikaners who felt that charity began at home.

It is against this historical background that the present attitude of the Afrikaans churches towards the Native and towards Native education must be understood. The Afrikaans churches are much less liberal than



the English; they object to joint meetings of Europeans and Bantu; the Native must keep his place; he must be treated with Christian kindness, but he is a child, spiritually, and must be dealt with on that basis. There must be strict segregation, socially and religiously; the Native can never be the equal of the European. Education must be "practical"—that is, not so academic as to unfit the Native for his rightful occupation—education must be nationalistic in the Bantu sense, so that the Native will become a good Bantu, venerating his traditions and language, rather than a "cheap imitation" of the European. The Afrikaans churches seldom face the fact that Western civilisation has undermined African culture and that the policy they advocate cannot be carried out in practice.

The development of Boer nationalism, which will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter, has greatly strengthened the traditional Boer attitude. There are, within the Afrikaans churches, many able and liberal ministers and laymen who, while not going the whole equalitarian way, are yet prepared to co-operate with the English churches, and are not afraid to speak and act in favour of a closer association with the Natives themselves. Some years ago this liberal group was strong enough to place the Dutch Reformed Church in a position of leadership in the matter of race relations when it promoted and assisted to organise a large and authoritative inter-racial conference. Since then the position has hardened under the influence of a younger group of nationalist ministers, and the older leaders have been pushed aside. To-day the Afrikaans churches officially refuse to take part in inter-racial meetings. The World Sunday School Convention was due to be held in Durban in 1940, and all the Afrikaans churches resolved to remain unrepresented because there was to be no colour bar. (The Convention was postponed on the outbreak of war.) For many months the question was publicly debated, and the resolutions taken by various Afrikaans bodies are instructive. The *Afrikanerbond vir Rassestudies* protested against the absence of a colour bar at the Convention on the following grounds: (1) no other nation has the colour problem in such a serious form; (2) the equality proposed by the Convention is opposed to the religious and social policy which, under God's guidance, makes a sharp dividing line between black and white; (3) experience has taught the Afrikaner that joint conferences make the non-European lose his respect for the white man, a respect necessary if the white man must assist the Native in his development; (4) joint conferences cause the "lower cultural race" to lose its own self-respect. The Transvaal Dutch Reformed Church, in many ways the most liberal of Afrikaans churches, attempted to compromise by agreeing to go if their representatives could be housed separately, sit separately, and have their tea separately. The other churches were quick to point out that, if this were agreed to, it would be the Afrikaners who would be segregated at the Convention; so the Transvaal church withdrew altogether in order to preserve a semblance of unity with the other Afrikaner churches. The

resolution of withdrawal contains this sentence: "The Church does not wish to withhold from any nation, white or coloured, as high a social status as it can achieve, and as high an economic position as it can attain, but, on the other hand, it is convinced that God in His wisdom has ordained that there shall be different racial, linguistic and colour groups in the world and the distinction between these cannot be erased without damage to the highest good of all." This resolution has been quoted because it well expresses the feelings of a large majority in the Afrikaans churches. This opinion is held by many sincere and upright men, and must be reckoned with in Native policy. A number of ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church felt humiliated that an international Christian conference was to be held on South African soil without any official representation from the largest South African church. These men would have attended the Convention unofficially, and thus proved that the whole Afrikaner church is not as illiberal as its official majority. (It is interesting to add that the Convention had the official patronage of the Government, which probably strengthened the opposition of the strong Nationalist Party element in the Afrikaans churches, and that the Durban Town Council had decided to abolish the colour bar on its trams and buses for the period of the Convention.)

The Natives themselves are well aware of the illiberal attitude of the Afrikaans churches, and the result is that they associate the Afrikaner with everything reactionary and the English with everything progressive, an assumption that is broadly true in the matter of Native education, but far from warranted in other fields. By their policy the Afrikaans churches are throwing away any chance of influencing the Native population in South Africa.

Other churches that have done good work among the Bantu are the Roman Catholic and the French and German Protestant churches. These need no comment except to note the facts that the German churches are generally taken to be more akin in policy to the Afrikaans churches, and that the Roman Catholic Church is cordially hated by the Afrikaans churches, partly because it is Roman, and partly because it is catholic in relation to colour.

#### 10. SOME DIFFICULTIES

While it is easy enough to criticise the present administration of Native education, it should be realised that the difficulties in the path of reform are considerable. The fundamental difficulty of lack of funds can, of course, not be finally overcome under capitalist conditions; but even a socialist administration would be faced with obstacles that would daunt the bravest reformer, and the parrot-cry of equality will not help us much at the present juncture. Readers in England are shocked to hear that Coloured, Bantu, European, and Indian are educated in separate schools; but it is difficult to see how any alternative would not result in

a general lowering of educational standards and efficiency. To take children from such widely differing environments and training and to attempt to educate them side by side would be folly. Few parents in England would voluntarily sacrifice the future of their children to a theory, especially to a theory that demanded the association of their children with Native children from particularly insanitary slums; to say that there ought not to be slums is to argue beside the point, since slums do not disappear at a word. It is more important to realise that under capitalism educational and other inequality is bound to persist, than to be shocked by the results of capitalism. Class distinctions produce class schools, as everyone in England knows.

Another difficulty about Native education is that of medium. There are in South Africa two official languages, English and Afrikaans, and it would be shortsighted to educate Natives without an efficient knowledge of both these languages. Most Natives want English rather than Afrikaans, partly because they associate Afrikaans with oppression, and partly because they regard English as of greater commercial value; but whether they learn one or both European languages, they are likely to develop an attitude of superiority towards their own Native language, and, thence, towards their own cultural habits. There is some truth in the remark that "the language of the conqueror on the lips of the conquered is the language of slaves"; that is not mere nationalist propaganda. Some of the best authorities on Native education are aware of this danger, but find it difficult to avoid. There is a multiplicity of Native languages, now reduced to four main groups, and there is no prospect of any of these being accepted by Europeans as official, though there are numbers of Europeans who speak them, and though they may be taken as subjects for the matriculation examination.

With the question of medium goes that of content, which has already been touched upon. The difficulty here lies in devising courses that will suit, not the Native in isolation, but the Native who has to earn his living in a society shaped according to European ideas. How is this to be done without doing catastrophic violence to African conceptions of life? How is it to be done so that education may have real meaning for the Bantu? The solution to these questions is by no means easy, and the mere addition of funds for Native education will not solve them.

Finally, the long tradition of missionary education, valued for the civilising work it has done, may possibly become a hindrance to more rapid progress. The missionaries are naturally anxious to retain control of Native education, but many Natives, while sensible of their debt to the missions, are beginning to feel that education should develop along non-sectarian lines. This feeling will have to be reckoned with, and its existence will not make the path of educational reform more rosy. European public opinion feels that Native education, if it must be, is safer under religious guidance, where it is less likely to prove subversive.

## CHAPTER XII

### HEALTH AND FOOD

#### I. INTRODUCTORY

IN SEEKING information about the health of the inhabitants of the Union we are hampered at the outset by the absence of official figures. Registration of births and deaths is compulsory for Europeans; for non-Europeans it is compulsory only in the urban areas, where it is not strictly enforced and where, in any case, the predominance of men over women in the large industrial areas reduces the value of the figures obtained. We are forced, therefore, to rely on the figures obtained from hospitals, and on such surveys and records as have been kept by individual medical officers of health. We have, in addition, the individual evidence of doctors and scientists who speak from personal experience. The situation revealed from these rather scattered sources is described in the following paragraphs.

#### 2. DISEASE

The annual report (1939) of the King Edward VIII hospital for Natives in Durban states that more than 50% of mothers in maternity wards showed positive blood tests for syphilis; 720 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were admitted and more than 50% died, owing largely to feeble natural immunity and under-nourishment. As the medical officer says: "With Natives an early case becomes an advanced one in a few weeks." The report maintains that "a fair description of most of our patients, admitted for any disease or injury, would begin with the phrase 'an under-nourished Native infected with intestinal parasites——' ". In Benoni, on the Witwatersrand, the medical officer reports that the death-rate for Europeans is 7.60 per 1,000, and for Natives it is 20.58, while the expectation of life for a European is sixty years, as compared with thirty-six years for a Native. Of Native deaths, 67% are said to be from disease associated with under-nourishment. Syphilis, unknown before the arrival of the Europeans, was found in about 34% of the Native women who attended ante-natal clinics. In another Witwatersrand area the infantile death-rate per 1,000 births among Natives was between 400 and 500; for Europeans the figure was sixty. Similar figures can be quoted for most of the large industrial areas, while reports of individual doctors suggest that the conditions are hardly better in the Reserves, where, as we saw in Chapter III, under-nourishment is chronic.

Dealing with the subject of typhus fever, of which there are about 8,000 cases a year (300 fatal), largely confined to Natives, that sober publication the *Official Year Book* (1938) says: "This prevalence (of

typhus fever) is to be ascribed in large measure to the pauperisation process affecting non-Europeans, especially during the depression years. Typhus will disappear in the Union as elsewhere with advancing civilisation, when the economic conditions of the Native are raised and he is able and willing to adopt standards of hygiene and cleanliness. Combating lousiness at present in the primitive, poverty-stricken Bantu is a formidable proposition."

From all the information available it may safely be stated that the death-rate among Natives is abnormally high and that a large proportion of the deaths is ascribable to under-nourishment, to insanitary housing, and to inadequate clothing; in fact, to sheer, grinding, poverty. Reports on the Coloured population tell the same tale. Nor are the non-Europeans the only sufferers. Sample surveys made in large towns show that more than 50% of the poorest European families are seriously under-nourished. South Africa is, of course, not unique in this respect. Take, for example, the report made by Dr Fraser to the Board of Education on a Junior Instructional Centre in Cumberland: "Apart from the physical condition their clothing and footwear are in the main deplorable. . . . Many of the boys are too unfit even to want to play football." Thus, in England and in South Africa, do citizens die a slow death because food is produced for profit and not for use.

### 3. MEDICAL FACILITIES

Before dealing with the question of under-nourishment we must discuss the facilities available for those who, largely through poverty, have become ill.

Public hospitals in South Africa are financed to the extent of about 70% by the State, the balance being made up by fees and donations. There is a large number of beds available in private nursing homes and private maternity homes, but since these are profit-making concerns, they do not affect the hospital accommodation available for the poor Europeans or for non-Europeans. The public provision for the sick consists of general hospitals and infectious disease hospitals, the former including children's hospitals, convalescent homes, and homes for the chronic sick. Taking the figures for 1937 as the most recent available, there are in the Union 5,148 beds in general hospitals and 1,041 in infectious-disease hospitals, for Europeans; the figures for the non-European population are 6,332 and 1,257 respectively. In addition to this, 7,246 beds are available for non-Europeans in hospitals run by mines and factories. If we exclude both the population and the beds owned by mines and factories, we find that, in round numbers, there is one bed to every 350 Europeans, and one to every 1,000 non-Europeans. The provision of hospital beds in London, admittedly inadequate, is at least four times as high as that for the Union.

More than 50% of the hospital beds are to be found in the ten or

twelve large urban centres; in not one of these areas is there anything approaching adequate hospital provision for either white or black. It may be judged, therefore, what the situation in the rural areas is. In the Free State, for example, which includes two or three comparatively populous regions, there is one bed to 1,900 non-Europeans. In the Native Reserves the figures are probably one bed to 5,000 Natives.

It was stated above that hospitals were financed partly by the State, national or provincial, and partly by fees and donations. The State or provincial contributions usually take the form of subsidies based on the amounts collected in fees and donations and on the number of pauper patients. In the case of a Native, being a non-paying pauper patient means having an income of less than about 10s. a month. In calculating the subsidy on pauper patients the authorities assume that it costs less to heal a non-European than it does to heal a European, for the amount paid for the former is 5s. a day and for the latter 12s. 6d.

The mining industry has long realised the value of adequate hospital provision for its employees. Major Orde Browne, Labour Advisor to the British Secretary of State for Colonies, addressed the Executive Council of the East African Board in July 1938 and strongly urged greater medical facilities for Native labourers. He is quoted in *Industrial and Labour Information* (Geneva) for 22/8/38 as having said: "The Native labourer in East Africa is often a perambulating museum of disease." He noted the tendency of plantation managers and planters to regard expenditure on medical provision for labour as "idealistic, fanciful, and somehow connected with Geneva", and he praised the medical provision made on the gold mines on the Rand. ". . . if they (the planters) will stop to think", said Major Orde Browne, "they will agree that those shrewd men who manage the Rand mines are not actuated solely by motives of humanitarianism." Whatever the motive, it may be agreed at once that, as regards hospital and medical facilities, the gold mines are an example that South African Governments might with advantage follow.

In the fiscal year 1936-1937 the total amount of public money spent on public health, hospitals, medical services, administration, leper and mental asylums, was about £2,250,000, and the most liberal estimate cannot allocate more than 25% of this as having been spent on behalf of the non-European population. During the same year more than twice the amount of public money spent on non-European health was spent by the Union Government in subsidising the export of those essential food-stuffs the lack of which contributes so greatly to the ill-health of the non-European population.

What is true of hospital accommodation is true of medical and nursing services. A very small number of the largest municipalities employ full-time medical officers of health, assisted by nurses, in their locations; the cost of this is borne by revenue raised in the locations. Government maintains about 370 district surgeons, of whom about 340 are part-time

and carry on concurrent private practices. For the Transkeian Territories, with a population of over a million people, there are thirty-one Government district surgeons, or one to every 33,000 inhabitants. For the whole population of the Union there are just under 3,000 doctors and just over 4,000 nurses. The majority of these doctors and nurses would be, to the Native, expensive luxuries which he could not possibly afford. Near the big urban locations there will usually be found a number of doctors with a Native practice, and a considerable amount of what can only be called medical profiteering takes place; for example, a European receives a prescription from his doctor, and a repeat order involves only the chemist's bill; but many doctors with a Native practice do their own dispensing and charge full price for a repeat order.

More African doctors and nurses are an urgent necessity, but, as we have seen, it is almost impossible for Africans to get a medical training in their own country. When they are trained, they have to build their own nursing homes, since they are not admitted to general hospitals. The training of African nurses is not quite so difficult, but even there most hospitals will not make provision for the training of non-European nurses. Behind this steadfast refusal to allow Africans to qualify so as to be able to serve their own people lies the fear of competition—employment will be taken from Europeans; there is also the colour prejudice, that will not tolerate the training of white and black in the same institutions. There are eight non-European doctors in the country, and some of them have considerable practices among Europeans, largely of the more superstitious kind, who look for magic rather than scientific medicine, even in a doctor trained in the best overseas medical schools.

It may easily be imagined that, where hospital and medical provision is so hopelessly inadequate and the diseases of poverty so rife, herbalists, witch-doctors, and the whole patent-medicine racket will flourish. They do. In Natal the Government recognises Native herbalists, and there, and elsewhere, witch-doctors practice illegally. There are cases, too, of Europeans who do a flourishing trade among Natives by fantastic methods of diagnosis and prescription; the individual charges are small but the turnover large. Many Natives have a superstitious fear of hospitals, but their belief in a bottle of medicine or a pill is almost unbounded. In remote country districts ignorant and illiterate Natives receive advertisements of the kind of quack remedies that are so freely advertised all over the world. Though exact figures are wanting, it seems fairly certain that Natives spend, in sum, more money annually on witch-doctors and patent medicines than they do on real medical attention. Some herbalists have grown so wealthy out of their trade that they run an extensive mail-order business, employ secretaries, and own motor-cars; a few of them even have their own clinics; and all this comes literally from the pennies of the poor Natives, for whom there are inadequate real medical facilities.

#### 4. "THE FAMINE IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EYES"

In 1938 the Union Parliament, and the country at large, was shaken to its foundations by the important question as to whether "God Save the King" or "Die Stem van Suid-Afrika" (The Voice of South Africa) should be played first, last, or at all at public functions. Parliament was packed out during the debates, and the country listened with bated breath to the legislative Voice of South Africa. Possibly due to an oversight, the subject of malnutrition (in plain English, starvation) was on the order paper at about the same time; but so strenuous had been the labours of legislators on the national anthem, that they felt entitled to a rest, and it was with great difficulty that the Party Whips were able to procure a quorum to debate starvation. Parliament or no, starvation persists, and in 1939 a science congress and a medical congress were so outspoken on the subject that the Press and the public were bound to take notice. Since, however, Native hunger is bound up with the export of maize and other foodstuffs, it is unlikely that Parliament will do anything about it.

The science congress dealt with the resources of South Africa and revealed an alarming state of affairs. The Union does not produce enough of the right kind of food for its population. The supply of whole-milk available is only enough to give a daily average of one-tenth of a pint per person, and, since Europeans consume considerably more than that, the bulk of the non-European population and the poorest Europeans must have less, or in most cases none at all. The supply of butter is not enough for the European population, let alone the non-European; of other foodstuffs derived from animals, just enough is produced to feed the European population, and the fact that so many poor Europeans have too little is due to the export of meat from the Union. Enough plant products are produced to feed the whole of the population; unfortunately, however, about 70% of the population is not in a position to buy these products at a price that will encourage the farmer to continue producing. There is no need to give further detailed figures. The facts available prove with a certainty that is overwhelming that a large majority of the inhabitants of the Union has insufficient food and is, as a consequence, prone to disease.

Faced with this situation, what have the European-elected Governments and their economic advisers done? They have, naturally enough, thought in terms of the European owners, and not in terms of the Native workers. Since the poor, Native and European, are unable to buy sufficient foodstuffs, there is said to exist a "surplus" which must be exported; but the Union is not, agriculturally, able to compete on the world market because its climate and soil, and the methods of its farmers, are less favourable than those pertaining in the great agricultural countries. So the export must be subsidised from general revenue to which the Native



must contribute, though he cannot afford to buy enough food. In 1937, £13,500,000 worth of agricultural produce was exported to England, and the production and transport costs of this were £15,000,000. The difference, plus the profit, was made up by subsidies, sometimes directly from general revenue and sometimes raised by means of a special levy on consumers. The case of maize, previously mentioned in Chapter VIII, must be referred to again in this connection. In 1939, with the world price of maize at about 6s. 6d., the Maize Control Board decreed a levy of 4s. a bag on all maize sold for human consumption in South Africa; this levy is paid, in the first instance, by the wholesale buyer to the Board, which subsequently pays the farmer a subsidy of 1s. 6d. a bag on all exported maize. In practice, therefore, the British farmer pays 6s. 6d. a bag for maize which he uses as cattle feed, the South African farmer pays 8s. 6d. for maize as cattle feed, and the South African poor pay 10s. 6d. for maize as food for themselves and their children.

An interesting feature of this device is that Native producers in the Reserves fall under the scheme too; there is no colour bar. And yet they, and Europeans who are interested in Native welfare, protested against the whole scheme; traders in the Transkei threatened to refuse to buy Native maize unless the scheme was dropped. The reason is this. Native farmers depend on their crops for cash; further, having no storage, they frequently sell most of the crop to the trader, and then, towards the end of the season, have to buy it back for their own use. They will, therefore, sell at 6s. 6d. to the traders, and later buy back at 10s. 6d. or more. Of course, they will receive the 1s. 6d. subsidy, but here another difficulty arises. Since the Natives frequently sell in small quantities at a time, it is difficult to calculate how many bags they have disposed of by the end of the season; so the 1s. 6d. is not paid to the individual producer, but to the South African Native Trust Fund for the benefit of all the Natives. The levy and the subsidy thus practically become a form of additional taxation on the Native producer. and, by increasing the Trust Fund, decrease the financial contribution which the European taxpayer might have to make towards Native social services. It is not surprising that the whole scheme met with a chorus of protests which were, in this case, sufficiently strong to bring about several modifications of the scheme. The principle, however, remains unaltered.

One more example of why there is not enough food for the poor will suffice; this time it is the poor Coloured population of Cape Town that was sacrificed to the need for a high price for wheat. The Wheat Control Board fixed prices for wheat in 1939, and also for the retail price of bread. (The price for wheat was twice that for which first-grade Canadian wheat could be landed at Cape Town.) Now, bakers in Cape Town had been accustomed to get rid of "stale" bread or surplus stock at 2d. a loaf instead of the 7d. which the Board had fixed. When the Board heard of this it promptly put a stop to it and threatened to take legal action

against the bakers. There was a public outcry, for Coloured men are voters in the Cape, and when it was finally divulged that the stale bread was being fed to horses, the Board modified its attitude.

What is true of maize and wheat is largely true of butter, meat, and sugar. The British consumer buys more cheaply of these South African products than does the population of the Union, and the health of the working class is suffering as a result. The same thing is true, in a different way, of wool. South Africa exports her wool to England and elsewhere, but at the same time the Government gives high tariff protection to woollen manufacturers, who import inferior cheap wool (noil) and make a profit out of selling inferior woollen blankets to Natives.

Economically the South African import and export system is as insane as only capitalism can be. Socially, the effects on the working-class in the Union are devastating.

### 5. IS ANYTHING DONE ABOUT IT?

It is no exaggeration to say that urban locations are riddled with disease due to malnutrition, insanitary housing, the absence of a proper water supply, and inadequate medical facilities. In the Reserves and European rural areas disease is not perhaps so rife, but under-nourishment and unhealthy living conditions weaken the resistance to disease and impair efficiency.

If these statements are true—and the matter seems to be beyond dispute—why does not the European population rise up in self-defence, to protect itself against contagion in the towns, and to increase the efficiency of its labourers and of its reserves of labour in the Native territories?

There is a strong liberal minority of Europeans who do constantly protest at the conditions that prevail and who urge reforms. After the recent revelations at the science and medical congresses there was something like a minor Press campaign calling for Government action. Industrial and commercial employers, always more alert than agricultural employers, are urging the fixing of a better wage standard for Natives. Leading doctors point out that South Africa's most valuable asset, Native labour, is being squandered recklessly, and that efficient labour cannot be expected now from underfed men and women, nor, twenty years hence, from their underfed babies. The Chief Medical Officer of Health for the Union has courageously advocated a socialised medical service, and has not hesitated to criticise mercilessly the export policy of the administration whose servant he is. Economists at the Universities never cease from pointing out the folly and the injustice of the Union's present policy. Finally, the mining industry, as we have seen, has long realised the need for healthy labourers, and has made its own arrangements independently of Government.

The large majority of Europeans are, however, either indifferent or antagonistic to reform; this is because of ignorance of the actual condi-

tions or because of economic class interests. Europeans in urban areas do not know, and if they do they do not care, what happens in the locations for which they are technically responsible. A letter from an "anxious parent" to a large daily paper aptly illustrates this ignorance. The mother wrote to object, on hygienic grounds, to little Natives drinking water at a public tap in town; in the location of that same town insanitary and unhygienic conditions abound, and in that location lived the people who handled the food and looked after the children of the Europeans. Possibly an epidemic that starts in the locations and sweeps through the European towns might arouse people to the danger of allowing such conditions to continue. Nothing short of that is likely to alter the conditions in the immediate future; and housewives will continue to complain of the "dirtiness" of their servants without stopping to think whether, in the circumstances, anything else is to be expected.

As for the rural areas, farmers are traditional employers of Native labour who have been accustomed to conceive of their economic interest as lying in a plentiful supply of low-paid and easily replaceable labour; and the worker must not be pampered.

Colour and class prejudice among the majority of the Europeans makes them oppose the establishment of proper medical facilities for Natives and blinds them to arguments either of justice or of enlightened self-interest. If anything is "done" for the Native he must pay for it himself.

These are the reasons why the liberal minority and minor Press campaigns are unable to make more headway in the matter of Native health: and, in any case, as long as the exploitation of landless labour continues to reduce the Native population to poverty, any reforms will be palliative only. This does not mean that palliative reforms in the matter of health and nutrition are worthless. Anything that will improve the present appalling conditions is to be welcomed; but it is as well to know what the limits of reformism are, and to realise clearly that production for private profit must, fundamentally, be a bar to progress, even while appearing to favour it under the guise of enlightened self-interest.

## CHAPTER XIII

# COLOUR BAR IN SOCIAL LIFE

## I. INTRODUCTORY

PROF. HOG BEN once wrote a letter to the *New Statesman and Nation* expressing his relief that his children were not being brought up in South Africa, where, among other things, Natives were not allowed to drive motor vehicles. As a matter of strict fact, he was incorrect, for there is nothing to prevent Natives from driving motor vehicles, either for them-

selves or for their employers, though there have been various attempts on the part of provincial councils to enact such a prohibition. Prof. Hogben's argument, of course, is not destroyed by this small inaccuracy, though it is somewhat difficult to see exactly why the atmosphere of one particular form of economic exploitation—that in Great Britain—should be so vastly superior to the form prevalent in South Africa. That it is felt to be so by Prof. Hogben would seem to indicate the existence of colour prejudice in his sub-conscious mind; he would otherwise hardly assume that it is better to exploit Europeans than to exploit Natives. Colour-bar exploitation of labour in South Africa is not different from the exploitation of labour in England; the addition of the colour merely enables us to see the exploitation more easily.

That colour prejudice and colour-bar legislation are functions of economic class divisions is true; it is equally true that they will not disappear until a reign of economic equality is established. These statements, however, do not cover all the facts of colour prejudice, and, in any case, the statements do not carry us very much farther at the present time. Any analysis of colour-bar legislation that is not firmly rooted in economics will be misleading; but it will be equally misleading to omit other operative factors.

It is perhaps well, at this stage, to distinguish between colour-bar laws and colour prejudice, for the former are quite reasonably explained by reference to economic conditions, while the latter needs more than economics for a complete explanation. A few examples will illustrate this. The creation of Native locations and the present agitation for separate residential areas for Asiatics and Coloureds have fairly obvious economic causes; if there were no locations, then the wealthier European urbanites would have to pay for the streets and lighting and other social amenities of the Natives; also, the value of real estate would deteriorate in those areas of the town where the Natives lived. In the same way the dependence of Native education on Native taxation, the colour bar in industry, and all the other discriminating legislation that was mentioned in previous chapters, may be referred simply to a class analysis. This legislation is, in fact, fundamentally class rather than racial; and parallels may be found in any capitalist country, though the absence of the distinguishing colour in the working-class may effectively disguise the facts.

On the other hand, the popular objections to mixed marriages and to social mixture of any kind cannot be satisfactorily explained on purely economic grounds. The main economic function of colour prejudice in South Africa is to give the employer a strong and popular excuse for creating a double exploitation of labour; in other words, social colour prejudice sanctions economic exploitation of the workers, and the social conscience fails to be appalled at the results because the worker is black.

To say that colour prejudice reinforces economic class divisions is not yet to explain colour prejudice. He would be a bold man who would

claim that any explanation he might give of that phenomenon would be complete. All that will be attempted here will be to deal with some of the spheres of social life in South Africa where colour prejudice operates strongly or weakly; to indicate why, in these spheres, economics alone is an insufficient explanation; and to note some of the social effects of colour prejudice.

## 2. COLOUR PREJUDICE

When the circus comes to town an enormous tent is erected, and the young of all ages and races live in terms of cowboys and trapeze artists. Inside the tent, white and black are separated into roped-off enclosures, and the Natives pay their money at a separate entrance; but the point is that they are admitted to the same show as the Europeans, and there is no public outcry against it. Theatres and cinemas, on the other hand, usually do not admit non-Europeans, except in the Cape Province, where separate seating accommodation is provided; a few cinemas on the Rand admit all colours, but they are not fashionable ones. When Sybil Thorndike was in South Africa she was able to gain permission for a few selected Natives to attend her performance of *St. Joan* in Johannesburg; but that was a concession to a distinguished visitor, and, for the most part, Natives are debarred from seeing or listening to European artists who visit the Union. If Paul Robeson visited South Africa he would have to sing to the Europeans in the theatres, and he would have to pay special visits to the locations if the people of his own colour wanted to enjoy his art. Now, if this social colour bar were a purely economic matter, either the circus would not admit Natives or the theatres and cinemas would; it is not merely a case of seeing the colour of the Native's money; in the one case his money is accepted and in the other it is refused.

Racing provides another example where the social colour bar is partly broken down. Even in those provinces where colour feeling is strongest, non-Europeans are admitted to race-courses as backers, as owners, and as jockeys, and only slight distinctions are made. The annual report of a Turf Club, in 1939, referred to the fact that about one-third of cash receipts for the year was obtained from Natives, and the report stressed the fact that Natives were playing an increasing part in local racing and that Native owners would have to be given more privileges in future. On the other hand, it is highly improbable that any one would promote a boxing match or a wrestling match in which a non-European was billed to perform against a European, though there is no law against this, and though such a match would prove highly profitable to the promoter. Some years ago a joint European-Bantu conference of students was held at Fort Hare, and a number of the European students, exhilarated at finding themselves for the first time in real contact with Natives, proposed to arrange a football match in which both black and white should

take part; but the older, and wiser, Europeans vetoed the proposal on the grounds that European public opinion would be too much shocked. The older men were right, because there was a great outcry in the Afrikaans Press against the conference itself, let alone a football match. Again, when the New Zealand Rugby team visits South Africa they are asked not to include Maoris; when the Springboks visit New Zealand they play against Maoris without losing caste.

Of the twelve large art galleries and museums in the Union, non-Europeans are admitted to all but one, and in that one they are not admitted because it is housed in a public library. In some of these galleries and museums certain days are reserved for Europeans only, while others admit non-Europeans on one day a week only. Non-European school children in charge of a teacher are admitted when convenient. Libraries, on the other hand, are not open to non-Europeans. Now admission to art galleries and museums is free, while admission to a library as a rule involves a subscription which the libraries are only too anxious to take. In these examples, therefore, the pure economic motive for colour prejudice is certainly not in evidence. The same may be said about the admission of non-Europeans to public parks and zoos, where admission is free, and their non-admission to public baths and pleasure resorts, where an entrance fee is charged.

European restaurants and hotels are not open to non-Europeans, just like the famous London hotel that refused to serve Paul Robeson. This does not affect 99% of the Native people, but it is hard on the very small minority; it is also hard on visiting foreigners who are not "white". It is of course well known that non-Europeans experience similar difficulties in London. The writer was told by someone engaged in smoothing the path of non-European students in the heart of the Empire that Chinese and Japanese could find accommodation reasonably easily in Bloomsbury, but that Indians would, as a rule, have to go farther afield, and Africans could only find poor accommodation farther east. In London, as in South Africa, it is obviously not just a question of ability to pay. In this matter of hotel accommodation, however, the economic motive is more evident than in the other examples that have been quoted, since admission of non-Europeans would drive away European customers.

Very few shops in South Africa have separate counters for non-European customers, yet few Europeans are deterred by that from visiting shops. Some of the bazaars and cheaper stores are a jostle of races, and if the owners of these shops thought that the presence of Native customers would drive away the European, they would soon provide segregated counters.

There is no need to do more than mention some further examples of social segregation; there are separate benches for Natives and Europeans at bus-stops, there is separate accommodation on trams and other public vehicles, there are separate churches, and there are even separate ceme-

teries. Everywhere there is separation in a smaller or greater degree; and where, as in some of the examples quoted above, both races gain admission at the same time, there is an unwritten code that dictates that the European shall be served first.

### 3. MISCEGENATION

There are few matters of colour prejudice that arouse such fierce heat as the question of mixed marriages; and of all the examples of colour prejudice that can be quoted it is probably the least susceptible to a straightforward economic explanation. With small exceptions, both Europeans and Africans frown upon mixed marriages. Parliament passed a law prohibiting illicit carnal intercourse between black and white, and if the Nationalist Party had its way a law prohibiting mixed marriages would be placed on the statute book. In urging such a step, the wife of a former Minister of Native Affairs recently stated that "South Africans believed that Divine Providence had given them a white skin for a purpose. It was God's work, and we believed we should not interfere with that." The reference to Divine Providence need not be taken as anything more than that it represents the strongest terms in which the lady found it possible to condemn mixed marriages; and that is an indication of the depth and the strength of the feeling against miscegenation. Many poor Europeans are economically worse off than some Natives or Coloureds, so that the feelings against mixed marriages cannot be ascribed to ordinary class prejudices.

Mixed marriages are, in point of fact, not numerous. Between 1931 and 1936, forty-two European men married Native women, and there were no marriages of Native men and European women; six European men and twenty-six European women married Asiatics; and 336 European men and seventy-five European women married Coloureds. It is probable that there are more illicit unions than marriages, but no accurate information is available on this point.

The progeny of mixed marriages are obviously not in a happy position, and it is well known that the ambition of a large number of Coloured people is to pass for Europeans. Many succeed in doing so, and the process is one greatly assisted by wealth. Though the fault is not theirs, it may be noted that the Coloured population shows signs of lack of stability and of cohesion; they are individuals rather than a race, and they evince very low powers of racial co-operation. They belong to neither racial group, and at the present time their economic and social position seems to be deteriorating, since they are caught between European racial prejudice and low-paid Bantu labour. Since, as a rule, they are anxious to associate with the European rather than with the African, they may be considered as allies of the employing rather than of the working class, and it is not unjust in this respect to compare them to the *petit bourgeoisie* of Europe. That the European population is dimly aware

of the value of this alliance is seen from the fact that, legislatively and socially, the Coloureds enjoy far more rights than do the Natives.

Fear of miscegenation, like other forms of colour prejudice, is by no means a monopoly of the Afrikaner; but, on the whole, Afrikaners have a greater and more deep-seated horror of social mixture than their English-speaking fellow-citizens have. A slight acquaintance with the English and Afrikaans Press is sufficient to convince anyone of this. The Afrikaner, traditionally, sees a great danger to his race from miscegenation, and feels that he may use any and every weapon to ward off that danger. It is perhaps because the English-speaking South Africans feel their kinship with a larger social group that they are not greatly perturbed by the fear of inter-racial marriages. This does not mean that they advocate mixed marriages, but merely that they see no urgent need to legislate against them.

To the minds of most South Africans miscegenation is the apex of all the social evils that will result from free intercourse with the Bantu. Talk about giving the Native the vote on equal terms with Europeans, and the reply is that miscegenation will result; defend equality of industrial wages, and your arguments are met by a reference to mixed marriages. It is the strongest of all colour prejudices, and it pervades politics, administration, religion, and social life generally. It is used as an argument to justify repression and to fight communism; the most ludicrous pseudo-biological phantasies are woven from the contemplation of miscegenation, and the electorate's flesh is made to creep by the use of this universal bogey. It is in vain to argue with most Afrikaners that mixed marriages are not, in a democratic State, controllable by laws. The fear is very real, and must be taken into account. Calling it colour prejudice does not eliminate it.

#### 4. WHY COLOUR PREJUDICE?

Innumerable theories have been advanced to account for colour prejudice, and each of the more serious theories probably has one side of the truth. From the illustrations quoted it is a fairly obvious deduction that colour prejudice is weakest in those branches of sport, for example, where actual physical contact is unnecessary; thus, it is weak in regard to racing, but strong in regard to boxing or football. Again, Colour prejudice will not allow mixed hotels, but does permit mixed shopping. This dislike, amounting to fear, of physical contact runs through most Colour prejudice. In regard to the mass of the Natives there are fairly obvious superficial explanations for this. Native habits of living, their manners, their ignorance of European ideas of hygiene, their strong body odour, and, in general, their totally different social customs, all create barriers between them and the Europeans and make physical contact with them distasteful. It is, of course, equally true that Natives dislike the body odour exuded by Europeans, but they are not in a social or economic



position to act on their dislike. The distaste that the ordinary European feels in the matter is not confined to Europeans living in South Africa. More than a century ago an English missionary "went Hottentot"; but the number of Europeans who would do that to-day is negligible, and it may safely be said that the ordinary British socialist, for example, whatever his sympathies with the oppressed Natives may be, would not live their life for any length of time. We are not here speaking of the few educated Africans who study in England. They have adapted themselves to European modes and manners, and the ordinary educated Englishman associates fairly easily with them, though the association is usually a trifle self-conscious. In the Union, too, many South Africans will meet educated Natives on terms of equality. But there is this difference between South Africa and England: English people meet the few educated Natives and fail to understand why South Africans have so much colour prejudice; but South Africans see the few educated Natives against a black background of the Native masses, and are afraid to distinguish between them lest the small trickle of association become a swollen river of social amalgamation.

Fear of the superficially dissimilar and fundamentally unknown is a very common human characteristic, which psychologists explain on various grounds such as subconscious jealousy and the cultural and economic self-protective instinct of the group. The economic fact that for generations the non-Europeans have, in South Africa, been either the slaves or the servants, and that it is obviously desirable to the average European mind that this state of affairs should continue, lends added force to colour prejudice; but it is not in itself a satisfactory explanation. It serves, however, to perpetuate the prejudice in its strongest forms. Children grow up imbibing the atmosphere of prejudice, fear, and repression. Hence Prof. Hogben's relief that he lives in Scotland. The "servant class" that performs all the menial tasks in a society based on private wealth is bound to be treated with a mixture of scorn and condescension by the owning class, unless it is strong enough to resist, in which case it ceases to be the servant class.

## 5. THE EFFECTS OF COLOUR PREJUDICE AND THE COLOUR BAR

However much psychologists, politicians, and economists may wrangle about the causes of colour prejudice and the colour bar, we are faced, finally, with the solid fact that they do exist and that certain results flow from that existence.

In the long run, the most devastating social and economic effects of the colour bar and of colour prejudice are those exercised on the European rather than on the non-European population. We have already noted the misery and grinding poverty, the injustice, the lack of social amenities, the hunger and the disease, that afflict non-Europeans in the

Union as a result of the colour bar. The psychological effect on them, though not readily calculable, must be great; it is well-nigh impossible for a Native in South Africa not to have an inferiority complex. Treated at the best with condescending kindness, and at the worst with cruel injustice; made to feel everywhere that he is different and even contemptible; suffering hunger while food is exported to profit the European employers; having few rights in his native land and being made to feel that what he has are privileges rather than rights; exploited at every turn—under such conditions the South African Native must be either a rebel or a slave. It would, of course, be an exaggeration to say that every Native feels this way. The large majority are probably ignorant of the causes of their misery; when they are reasonably well fed and have not to work too hard, their natural cheerfulness and good-humour make them contented with their lot. A growing minority, however, particularly in the towns, realises perfectly well to what their condition is due; and to the educated African that condition is a constant insult to his personality. Whether they realise it or not, the Natives are unable to live the normal life of freemen. Spiritually and economically they might well echo Ebenezer Elliott's *Jacobin's Prayer*:

“Avenge the plundered poor, O Lord!  
But not with fire, but not with sword;  
Not as at Peterloo they died  
Beneath the hoofs of coward pride.  
Avenge our rags, our chains, our sighs,  
The famine in our children's eyes!  
But not with sword; no not with fire  
Chastise thou Britain's locustry!  
Lord, let them feel thy heavier ire;  
Whip them, O Lord, with poverty.  
Then, cold in soul as confined dust,  
Their hearts as tearless, dead and dry,  
Let them in outraged mercy trust  
And find that mercy they deny.”

And what about the Europeans? The economic condition of the growing poor white class, and the state of agriculture, would seem to suggest that colour-bar legislation is not as successful as its supporters hope. Colour prejudice has helped to establish an economic ideology that uses such terms as “civilised labour” and “kaffir work”, that treats workers racially, and that attempts to build a “white” civilisation on the poverty of a “black” proletariat. The result has been an increasing difficulty in maintaining European standards of living and a progressive pauperisation of large groups of the European population; the popular remedy for this is to plunge ever deeper into the bog of colour-prejudiced capitalism. Popular fear of the Native grows on the evils of colour-bar laws, and, as a drug addict requires ever larger doses of his poison, so more colour bar is demanded to satisfy the cravings of an economically declining Euro-

pean civilisation. The reality of the fears that beset the European population is not in dispute; those very fears make the obvious solution incomprehensible and unacceptable to the mass of the Europeans. As in the case of the non-Europeans, we need not imagine that every white inhabitant of South Africa lives consciously with these fears; but subconsciously European civilisation in the Union acts as if it were living on the edge of a volcano, a condition not conducive to healthy and normal development. Bernard Shaw pointed out that since South Africans had allowed themselves to become dependent on subservient Native labour, their civilisation was no longer a free one.

If we consider colour prejudice as the social and economic mechanism by which Western civilisation in South Africa hopes to preserve itself intact against the threat of a rival civilisation, then it has signally failed to achieve its end. Looking past the present condition of the African, and disregarding his first pitiful attempts, and failure, to unite against exploitation, his position is more hopeful than that of a fear-ridden European minority. The African may look to the future, however far distant; the European must comfort himself as best he may in a declining capitalist society. Meanwhile, the total effect of colour bars in South Africa is social abnormality and economic retrogression for all.

#### 6. IS COLOUR PREJUDICE DECLINING?

It was popular, some years ago, for liberal-minded people to say that conditions were improving because so many young people at the universities were "taking an interest in the Native question". It is undoubtedly true that there is far more awareness to-day of the seriousness of the situation; and some of the universities are producing a few men and women who have thrown off the chains of colour-bar thinking. Concurrently, however, the colour-bar feeling has hardened among others. With a number of notable individual exceptions, it is at the predominantly English-speaking universities that liberalism in racial matters is flourishing; in the Afrikaans-speaking centres it is, if anything, declining. As organisations for the promotion of co-operation between European and non-European are founded, opposition societies that study the African in isolation and actively combat co-operation spring to life. There is to-day a larger proportion than formerly of Europeans who are prepared to advocate economic equality, without committing themselves on social colour bars; but the racial propagandists are correspondingly more outspoken and insistent. Economic facts are forcing industrial and commercial leaders to advocate the abolition of the colour bar in industry, and even those strongholds of reactionism, the Trade Unions, are beginning to realise their community of interests with the non-European workers; but the same economic facts are producing in other quarters an even greater insistence on the need for the colour bar.

## CHAPTER XIV

# TRADE UNIONISM AND MASS MOVEMENTS

### 1. EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS

A TRADE UNION is defined by the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 as a body of employees, but the word "employee" is defined, with true colour-bar logic, to exclude pass-bearing Natives who form the bulk of the working-class in South Africa. They cannot, therefore, form registrable unions,<sup>1</sup> and we shall see presently under what disabilities the unregistered organisations that they do form must labour.

Trade unionism for Europeans and for coloured workers had its small beginnings before Union. At the time just prior to Union there were seventeen unions with a total membership of about 9,000, mostly in mining; by the end of 1937 there were 155 unions with a membership of about 220,000. Of these unions, thirty-three had less than 100 members, fifty-four had between 100 and 500, twenty between 500 and 1,000, twenty-three between 1,000 and 2,500, ten between 2,500 and 5,000, and fifteen over 5,000. The largest unions are those in mining, engineering and metal-working, building, printing, railways, municipal employment, and the manufacturing of clothing. Many unions do not represent more than 10% of the workers engaged in that trade, while a large number of trades have no effective unions at all.

In the early days of trade unionism, and even by 1910, the vast majority of the skilled workers on the mines were English-speaking, and Trade Unions were modelled on those in Britain, plus a touch of syndicalism; indeed, in the 19th century such unions as were formed were branches of English unions. From 1910 onwards a steady stream of young Afrikaners began to migrate from the land to the Rand, and the fact that Afrikaners and English joined the Mine Workers' and other unions gave the official Labour Party under Colonel Creswell a strong bargaining position. It is significant of labour history since Union that the first important action taken by the Labour Party was to secure the position of European workers at the expense of the Africans. In 1911 the Labour Party assisted in carrying the famous Mines and Works Act which debarred workers from certain skilled occupations on the grounds of colour; and in a conference at Cape Town in 1912 the official Labour Party policy was laid down—segregation of white and black, and immigration to displace Native labour.

In 1913 European miners struck in order to gain recognition for their Trade Unions, and the Government used Imperial troops against them, but unsuccessfully. In the next year a strike of coal-miners in Natal

<sup>1</sup> See note to page 30.

spread rapidly, and developed into a general strike of railway workers and miners, which the Government broke by calling out 60,000 burghers under the Defence Act. It was then that General Smuts summarily and unconstitutionally deported nine strike leaders to England; and the intense public feeling aroused by this act, together with Labour victories in the Transvaal provincial elections, forced the Government—by now weakened by the defection of General Hertzog and his Nationalists—to give the European workers what they had failed to obtain by striking: security of wages and accident compensation. The Government had also to abandon an attempt to declare strikes and lock-outs illegal.

After the Great War, South Africa set out in earnest on the path of industrialisation, and the number of white and black workers, and of European Trade Unions, increased rapidly. By this time the war-time prosperity of the gold-mining industry was coming to a temporary end, and towards the close of 1921 the mining employers attempted to use non-Europeans on semi-skilled work. Then the coal-owners cut wages, and so precipitated a large-scale mining strike in the Transvaal. The miners were entirely out for their own white interests, and, so far from protecting the interests of their black fellow-workers, they protested publicly against a Government that refused to "protect the white race". Along the whole Reef strikes took place, and a small group of communists, calling itself the Council of Action, took charge; for some days the revolutionaries were in control of the Rand, but the Defence Force was called out by the Prime Minister, General Smuts, and the rising was put down. In 1924 the Industrial Conciliation Act was passed, and since then trade union history has been more peaceful, since the Act provides machinery for settling disputes by arbitration through industrial councils. In the same year, too, the Labour Party made an alliance with the Nationalists, and for the next nine years Labour was officially in office, and, thus, in a strong position to safeguard the interests of the European workers whom it represented.

Owing to the influx into industry of more and more Afrikaans-speaking workers, a new factor has entered into European trade unionism—namely, the English-Afrikaans question. Coinciding with the influx was a distinct move to the left of large numbers of workers, particularly in the smaller unions, and the new or "purified" Nationalist Party under Dr. Malan has been able to use the alleged communism of these unions as an excuse for an attempt to create parallel Afrikaans-speaking unions to cater for the Afrikaner in industry. Mrs. Marais, of Stellenbosch, who was the Lady Houston of Nationalism, donated £10,000 for this purpose, and as this is being written it is announced in the Press that Mr. Neethling, also of Stellenbosch, has left £50,000 for the same purpose. Dr. Hertzog, son of the ex-Prime Minister, is one of the most active agents of the movement for rescuing Afrikaner men and women from the "clutches of communism". The movement is hampered by the refusal of the Gov-

ernment to register more than one union in any trade, and it is, so far, merely succeeding in splitting the European labour movement; it is also succeeding in whipping up colour-bar feeling just at a time when the European unions were beginning to see the need for co-operating with Native workers. This is, of course, not mere accident, but rather a neat example of Lenin's dictum that "the *bourgeoisie* of the oppressed nations are constantly converting the slogans of national liberation into means for deceiving the workers".

Some of the manifestations of the Afrikaner trade union movement must be noted for their bearing on the economic position of the Native and for their influence on the working class in general. At the Iscor (Iron and Steel Corporation) works, in 1939, Afrikaner workers, organised by the Nationalists, held protest meetings against the alleged discharge of European workers who were to be replaced by Natives. Iscor is a semi-public corporation, and one speaker said: "When Iscor was established we understood that it was to provide work for European boys." The same speaker said: "The present system (at Iscor) is capitalist and an apeing of European systems." These are typical of the Nationalist vote-catching statements. Dr. Hertzog toured the country, warning his audiences everywhere on the *platteland* of the dangers of communism; he maintained that about 80% of the Trade Unions were in the hands of people from overseas who had no love for the Afrikaner; 90% of the European mine-workers were Afrikaners, yet the secretary of the union was a communist; 8,000 girls in the Garment Workers' Union were at the mercy of a communist Jew.

In 1938 Dr. Hertzog and his friends attempted to set up a separate union for Afrikaner miners on the Rand, but the attempt was foiled by the virtual alliance of the old Mine Workers' Union and the Chamber of Mines; these two bodies, workers and employers, were able to agree to the closed-shop principle, but the workers had to agree not to demand an increase of wages. This joint action between labour and capital gives point to the Nationalist accusation that the English-speaking workers and their English-speaking capitalist employers are combining against the Afrikaner worker. Dr. Hertzog called it "co-operation between capitalism and communism", but in this he was wrong since the Mine Workers' Union is emphatically not communist, especially in its attitude towards the non-European worker.

Having failed to establish a separate union on the gold mines, the Nationalists attempted to capture the position from within by gaining control over the Executive Committee of the union. The partial and temporary success of this movement was accompanied by so much violent speaking and accusation of bad faith that feelings ran high, and an unbalanced young Afrikaner assassinated Harris, one of the oldest leaders of the Mine Workers' Union.

The Nationalists are using colour and racial prejudice to the full in this

battle for the labour movement, and those unions in the Cape that admit coloured workers are constantly in the headlines of the Nationalist Press. An ordinary social gathering at which coloured and European workers are present is described in lurid language as a warning to the *platteland* farmers not to vote for a Government that allows such goings-on.

It was stated earlier that the Nationalist move to capture the Afrikaner workers coincided with a leftward movement of the Trade Unions. We must not, however, be misled by the accusations in the Nationalist Press into exaggerating the strength of this tendency. The attitude of the Trade Unions to the colour bar is a fairly good test of the extent and depth of their alleged communism. Speaking in 1939 at the annual meeting of the Trades and Labour Council, which represents about fifty unions, the president stressed the need for the consideration of the non-European in industry and suggested *parallal* unions; he also criticised the communists severely for suggesting that there should be complete equality. When the other large federation of unions, the Cape Federation of Labour Unions, asked the Trades and Labour Council to join it in supporting the nomination of a coloured worker as a delegate to the International Labour Conference at Geneva, the request was refused.

Even the Cape Federation of Labour Unions is not unanimously in favour of admitting Native workers, though some of their affiliated unions do actually follow this policy. In the Transvaal there are a few small and active unions that either aim at admitting Natives to membership or actually do so. It is doubtful, however, whether these unions are fully representative of the workers, though Afrikaans as well as English names appear on their membership lists.

The situation may be summed up as follows: European Trade Unions have a long colour-bar history, and their traditional policy has been to protect the high wages for skilled labour at the expense of the rest of the workers. In very recent years a minority of the smaller unions, under communist influence, has decided to abandon the colour bar, but the large majority of skilled European workers still follows the traditional policy of trade unionism in South Africa. The entry into the labour field of the Afrikaner Front with its anti-communist and anti-Native slogans has thrown the European labour movement into confusion; the older unions in the more skilled trades will probably jettison the semi-socialist ideas that were just beginning to influence them, in an attempt to maintain a semblance of solidarity among European workers; and the younger and more vigorous unions will thrive on anti-communist attacks, and may even form the nucleus of a real labour movement based on labour, and not on colour. Finally, the large majority of European skilled and unskilled workers will, on a question of the colour bar, line up on the white side of the bar.

## 2. ASIATIC AND COLOURED MOVEMENTS

During the major strikes recorded in the previous paragraph, Native workers remained passive; they were unorganised, had no legal right to strike, and the issues involved were such that their immediate interests lay with the employers rather than with the European workers, who were busy entrenching their own position at the expense of the non-European. Nevertheless, there were movements of considerable importance, and quite distinct from the European labour movement.

In 1911 Gandhi led a widespread passive resistance movement among the Indians in Natal, and the Government retaliated with an immigration bill threatening to prevent any more Indians from entering the Union. By 1913 Gandhi had put forward his Five Points demanding reform of harsh laws and complete equality of treatment for Indians, and he led a propaganda march of 2,700 Indians from Natal into the Transvaal. Then, as now, the law prevented Indians from crossing provincial borders without permission, and Gandhi, with his eye for the simple and dramatic forms, deliberately chose this harmless method of law-breaking. He was arrested, and though the Minister of Justice, General Smuts, sent him philosophical books to read in prison, his arrest was the signal for a number of strikes among the Indian coolies on the Natal sugar plantations, and he was released. At the same time the Government appointed a commission of enquiry, which Gandhi boycotted because the Indians were not represented. Finally, in 1914, Gandhi and General Smuts negotiated directly and a compromise was reached.

Except for 1924, when the Government threatened legislation to segregate Indians in urban areas—the Class Areas Bill—there were no further developments until 1927 when the Government once more proposed legislation discriminating against the Indians. This time direct negotiation with the Government of India averted trouble, and an agreement was reached which, among many other things, established the Natal Indian Trade Union Congress as a registered union. Incidentally, the chief representative on the Union Government's side was Dr. Malan, then Minister for the Interior in the old Nationalist administration; he has travelled a long way since the time when he negotiated, and negotiated ably and liberally, with men who were not Europeans.

In 1938 and 1939 Nationalist agitation, led by the same Dr. Malan, called for segregation of Indians in the Transvaal and of Coloureds in the Cape, and once more brought this aspect of the colour bar to the fore. The Government, under pressure of many of its own followers to steal the Nationalist thunder, compromised with a bill to prevent Asiatics in the Transvaal from carrying on trade except in definite areas, and to limit the granting of trading licences. The bill was passed, and is to come into full operation in 1941. It has naturally aroused fierce opposition among the Indians, and there is talk of another passive resistance cam-



paign; but the Indian community is divided, not only on the advisability of passive resistance, but on the issue of segregation itself. This new threat to the Indian and Coloured population has produced an incipient non-European front, which will be discussed presently; but Gandhi has advised the Indians against joining this.

The agitations among the Indians in South Africa have not emanated so much from labour conditions as from political, social, and commercial disabilities; it would, therefore, be incorrect to speak about an Indian labour movement. Further, the Indians in South Africa are, for the most part, either small traders or domestic servants, and only a small proportion is in industry. Their interests are therefore not those of the unskilled Bantu working-class, and they do not identify themselves to any extent with the African. The Indians in the Union are racially prejudiced against the Bantu, though not to the same extent as are the Europeans; their religion, customs, and language separate them from Europeans and Bantu alike. For their part, the Bantu regard the Indians as something alien, sometimes admired and frequently despised. It is unlikely that Indians and Bantu will combine in any class movement.

The Coloured population of the Transvaal, Natal, and Free State is too scattered for any distinctive movement to have arisen among these people. In the Cape Province, however, there are numerous Coloured Trade Unions, and Coloured workers are, as a rule, admitted to European unions. There is also a political organisation, dating from pre-Union days, called the African People's Organisation, and for over thirty years this organisation has been guided by a Malay doctor, Dr. Abdurahman,<sup>1</sup> who has been for many years a member of the Cape Provincial Council and is now a member of the Cape Town municipal council. The organisation is concerned with political rather than industrial disputes, and has only functioned as a mass movement when political or social rights were threatened. Latterly a number of Coloured people, among them Dr. Abdurahman's daughter, have veered considerably to the left in politics, and are taking a leading part in the non-European Front movement.

The popular agitation, organised by the Nationalist Party, for separate residential areas for Coloured people in the Cape, reached its climax in 1939, and the rumour that the Government was going to surrender to popular feeling brought the African People's Organisation into action. Mass meetings were held, frequently with the aid of the Communist Party, and one such meeting in Cape Town marched to Parliament to present its protest. A clash with the police ensued, and the demonstrators were dispersed after serious street-fighting. But the Government took alarm and, since the agitation for separate areas was of Nationalist origin, those Government supporters who opposed class legislation on grounds of principle were able to convince their colleagues of the danger to the United Party of interfering with the rights of the Coloured population.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Abdurahman died in 1941.

The Communists, and the Coloured people generally, were jubilant at the success of their demonstration of strength, and have obviously taken heart for future struggles from the knowledge that the Government "ran away before a show of force". But the struggle is not over, and the African People's Organisation realises this and is preparing for further battle.

As with the Indians, so with the Coloureds: there is race prejudice against the Africans. The most intelligent Coloured people realise the community of interest of all workers, but the mass of Coloureds despise the Natives, and wish to link their destinies with the European population; the Bantu, on the other hand, regard the Coloured people as "low class". So far, the Coloured opposition to the ruling class has been on the grounds of rather narrow sectional interests, and there is little evidence that the Coloured worker will easily associate himself and his interests with the Native worker. This statement is made despite the German broadcast on the Coloured demonstration at Cape Town (mentioned above), which described it as an example of the "African people at last rising against their cruel exploiters".

### 3. AFRICAN UNIONS AND STRIKES

The Bantu workers in South Africa have, since the Great War, been going through a process similar in many respects to that through which British workers went a century ago; but for them the fight is harder because they have to contend not only with oppressive laws that hamper their organisation, but also against the prejudice of their fellow-workers, the Europeans, from whom they were entitled to expect help. The story of their struggle is to be sought not only in working-class or trade union movements, but often in isolated and blind revolts against conditions that had grown intolerable. And the story is really just beginning.

In 1918 the European workers at the Johannesburg power-station struck and forced the municipal authorities to come to terms. Following their example, Native sanitary employees struck for well-deserved higher wages, but, since they were pass-bearing Natives and subject to the Masters and Servants Law which makes failure to appear for work a crime, they were arrested and sentenced to two months' imprisonment. In passing sentence, the magistrate remarked: "While in gaol they will have to do the same work as they have been doing, and will carry out the employment with an armed escort, including a guard of Zulus armed with assegais and white men with guns. If they refuse to obey orders they will receive lashes as often as may be necessary to make them understand that they have to do what they are told." The idea of Natives striking was a new and terrifying one, and the magistrate was probably interpreting public opinion with accuracy. But the country was soon to have a much more startling experience.

In 1919, Clements Kadalie, a Nyasaland Native, appeared on the

scenes and began to organise a Trade Union among African workers. This was the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, usually known as the I.C.U., and their first big trial of strength came at Port Elizabeth, in the Cape Province, where Masters and Servants Laws do not apply; here Kadalie organised the unskilled Native workers to strike for better wages. He met with considerable opposition from the middle-class Natives who resented his intrusion, and, naturally, the European authorities waited only for a plausible excuse to arrest him. This they did in October of 1920, and, so great was his influence, the inflamed workers sent a deputation to the police demanding his release and threatening to effect it themselves if the police refused. When their ultimatum was rejected the Natives marched in a body to the police station, where serious fighting took place, resulting in the death of one European and twenty-three Natives, and in serious injuries to fifty-two more people. The official commission of enquiry that followed these riots proved beyond doubt that European civilians, who had volunteered to assist the police, had been the most reckless in firing *after* the resistance of the strikers had been broken.

The first big strike had failed, but the I.C.U. became more popular than ever. Its power increased so rapidly that General Hertzog, then leading the Nationalist opposition and angling for the Cape Native vote, sent Kadalie a cordial letter and a donation to his funds. That letter has since been used by the latter-day Nationalists against General Hertzog, before his resignation as Prime Minister, to prove his pro-Native sentiments.

Branches of the I.C.U. sprang up like mushrooms in the industrial areas, and propaganda was even made among the scattered and isolated farm labourers. Unsuccessful strikes took place in Johannesburg and elsewhere, and, though the I.C.U. was not always the organising force, its agents were the strike leaders.

By 1926 the I.C.U. had reached its highest point under Kadalie, and it had a membership of more than 100,000. Then decline set in, for the pace had been too hot to maintain and the organisation had not been founded on right lines. Kadalie was a tall, good-looking man whose oratorical powers were considerable. To watch him address an open-air meeting and, as he neared the climax of his impassioned speech, pluck off his coat, then his waistcoat, and finally his collar and tie, in a kind of dramatic symbolism, was to realise the power he wielded over his Native audiences. But he was a demagogue, however splendid; and, vast though his oratorical powers over the mob were, he had neither the training nor the character to build a sound and disciplined organisation. His application for affiliation to the European Trade Unions, which might have helped him to avoid fundamental errors, was refused on the grounds partly of colour and partly that his 100,000 members would swamp the unions. When, in 1928, the Independent Labour Party in Britain sent a

Scottish trade unionist, Mr. Ballinger, to assist the organisation, it was too late to save it without evicting Kadalie himself from the movement. The funds were in a state of chaos and the organisation was badly in debt; officials had helped themselves liberally and squandered recklessly. Kadalie himself was a spent force, and the I.C.U. had seen its most vigorous days. It had never been a purely industrial union, and had organised workers rather than trades; in this it resembled the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union in England in the 19th century.

The I.C.U. still exists, but it is a shadow of its former self. However, its spirit lives on in the Native Trade Unions that have arisen since then. On the Rand alone there are about a dozen Native unions, and some of them have been successful in improving labour conditions; but the odds against them are enormous. Except in the Cape Province, striking is illegal under the Masters and Servants Acts. That means that only at the end of the term of contract, after due notice, may the Native discontinue his employment. Mine-workers are, therefore, definitely unable to organise a legal strike; workers on monthly contracts may decide to leave at the end of the month, but that does not worry the employers, who have plenty of time to engage other workers; and Natives have little feeling of disloyalty in taking the place of strikers. Weekly and day labourers are thus the only workers in a position to use the strike weapon, but, since by the nature of their contract they are the most difficult to organise, their strikes would be the least effective. Most of the workers are unskilled or semi-skilled, and the organisation of particular trades on a large scale is difficult. That such unions are actually organised is a tribute both to the Native workers and to a small band of devoted European organisers who assist them.

That the Government is not happy about the existence of Native Trade Unions is proved by a speech of the Minister of Labour in October 1938. He said that the Native unions on the Rand not subject to government control were in grave danger of falling into the hands of an "undesirable type of organiser"; though he believed firmly in trade unionism, he maintained that it demanded a high degree of responsibility of which the Native was not capable; the salvation of the Native worker lay in an organisation along lines laid down by the Departments of Labour and of Native Affairs; this would be a guarantee against "irresponsibility, against communism and other subversive tendencies"; the Native had never been so exploited as when he had tried Native Trade Unions; the scheme now proposed (departmental control of unions) would be confined to urban areas (naturally, for what chance would it otherwise have of passing through a farmers' parliament?).

The speech of the Minister of Labour has been referred to at length because it illustrates the European attitude towards Native workers' organisations. From the point of view of the Minister of a capitalist Government, the Native unions on the Rand have undoubtedly fallen

into the hands of undesirable organisers. But he was wrong in saying that the Natives had been exploited under their own unions; on the contrary, they had often secured increased wages, which is perhaps why the Minister spoke about subversive tendencies. Commenting on the Government's decision to "tackle" the question of Native unions, one English newspaper wrote about "so-called trade unions and other organisations controlled by irresponsible and disruptive elements who were agitators, anti-social and inflammatory". Forgetting that there are in existence a number of successful Native unions—too successful, perhaps, from the employers' point of view—the editor of the paper in question calmly goes on to state that Natives are not amenable to "trade union organisation on conventional lines", and that they must be "protected against exploitation by subversive influences". One suspects that the real people whom the editor wants to protect are the employers.

No better testimonial to the work of the few Native unions can be given than the newspaper article just quoted and than the determination of the Government to control the unions. What the Government really proposes to do is to substitute for effective Trade Unions the company unions so well known in the United States. As one liberal periodical put it: "For a united body of workers determined to resist exploitation and exact their economic worth there will be substituted a docile body of Natives whose demands and views must be tempered by what their advisers consider fair and reasonable. How is the Native to ventilate his real grievances?"

During the last four or five years (from about 1935) the more radical European unions have given financial and advisory aid to the Native unions, and individual Europeans—usually, though not always, communists—have rendered invaluable assistance, especially in negotiations with employers and in keeping finances straight. This latter question has always been a difficult one, since the Native Labour movement, like similar movements in their early stages in other countries, has frequently attracted to its ranks men who saw a chance of making easy money at clerical work. A certain amount of disinterested European control and advice is therefore invaluable at the present stage of development. In the nature of things, the Europeans who are likely to render this service are left-liberals or communists, and they naturally constitute what the general European opinion calls "subversive elements". It is, however, doubtful whether the rank and file members of African Trade Unions are socialist or communist; it would be safer to call them radicals.

The leaders of the Native labour unions are not, as a rule, the manual workers, though most of them have had some experience in that way. Men like Kadalie and Champion are not working-class men in the accepted sense of the word. It is interesting to note, too, that Native chiefs have practically no influence on the industrial urban workers. In June of 1939, Sibindi Zulu, grandson of that famous Zulu King Cetewayo

whom the British Government harried to his grave, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for inciting mine labourers in Natal to strike. Zulu has been a "boss-boy" at the colliery for twenty years, and he denied the accusation that he had made use of the prestige of his royal blood to influence the workers; the Press report of the trial stated that he had said in evidence that "he did not attach much importance to his royal blood, which he did not believe gave him any influence". The magistrate "took a grave view of the case because of the accused's position", but we may safely accept Zulu's word for it, and regard the use made by the prosecution of his royal blood as a rather undignified piece of meanness in a direct line with the treatment meted out to his grandfather in 1879 by Sir Bartle Frere, acting on behalf of the British Government.

The difficulties of organising Native labour unions may be summed up as follows: the workers are poor, unskilled, often ignorant; they move easily from one occupation to another; the colour bar operates against them legally, and colour prejudice on the part of Europeans regards any effective organisation as subversive; colour prejudice further denies them the active sympathy of European, Coloured, and Indian workers; there are few African leaders; the effective use of the strike weapon is denied them by the Masters and Servants Laws, which enable the police to interfere on the side of the employers in industrial disputes. Finally, the Natives themselves are far from unanimous, and tribal, personal, religious, and economic differences prevent the solidarity of the workers.

From time to time there have been serious riots not specifically connected with any particular industry; they cannot be called working-class riots, but represent, rather, unorganised and spontaneous protests against authority. In 1918 a Native, Enoch Mgijima, saw visions of a battle between two white Governments, with a baboon crushing them both. The obvious interpretation of this vision disturbed the Native religious sect to which Enoch belonged, and he was discommunicated by the Natives themselves. He then founded his own sect, called the Israelites, and, being a man of great eloquence, soon had a considerable following, whose custom it was to make an annual visit to the Bulhoek location near Queenstown to hold a Passover service. Presently the whole sect settled near the location, and Enoch was actually recognised by the Government as a headman, though official permission to form a permanent settlement was never specifically granted. Natives in a neighbouring location began to object to the presence of the Israelites, who had started to erect buildings on the commonage and whose numbers were rapidly increasing. Towards the end of 1920 the administration began to hear reports that Enoch was conspiring against the Government; these reports were true, and Charles Mgijima, a sort of commander-in-chief, was drilling his followers. The Government could obviously not afford to allow matters to drift, and a strong body of police was sent out, only to be defied by the Israelites, who had inside information that the police had been instructed

not to fire. After repeated attempts to negotiate, where the officials seemed to have behaved with great sympathy and forbearance, the Government put 800 men into the field, and the Israelites, directed by Charles and Enoch, advanced to meet them, convinced that their bullets would be harmless. The result was inevitable, and large numbers were shot down.

In the trial of the ringleaders there was sufficient evidence to prove that Enoch had consistently preached that "the hour of the black man was approaching"; as the presiding judge said: "I am sure that the great bond which bound these people together under the accused Enoch and Charles was the crazy notion that the day was coming when the black man was to have his freedom".

The Bulhoek affair was an organised but vague, ill-conceived, and hopeless attempt on the part of a crowd of ignorant men to overthrow European government. Urban riots are of a different character, being both more definite in their limited objectives and more truly popular. In 1925 large numbers of the inhabitants of the Bloemfontein locations, goaded by low wages and high living costs and by irritating police methods in the matter of illicit beer-brewing, struck work and assumed a threatening attitude towards the European public. Alarmed at the situation, the police called for civilian volunteers to "defend the town", and it is fairly evident from the detailed reports that the truculent and threatening attitude, chiefly of the armed civilians, precipitated a fight which resulted in the death of a number of Natives. The town council of Bloemfontein subsequently set up an enquiry into the causes of the discontent and, very sensibly, removed some of the worst grievances. All this occurred just before King Edward VIII, then Prince of Wales, visited Bloemfontein, and though his reception by the Natives was enthusiastic enough, a meeting representing about 500 Natives passed a resolution to have nothing to do with the welcome extended to the heir to the crown in whose name their fellow-citizens had recently been shot down. As the Press pointed out, 500 was, after all, a small percentage of the inhabitants; it was, in fact, 10% of the adult males.

In 1929 serious riots occurred in Durban, and there is an unproved but fairly well-founded suspicion that the then Minister of Justice, Mr. Pirow—ever a believer in the strong arm—was, to put it mildly, not displeased at the opportunity afforded of "teaching them a lesson", the lesson, in this case, being the dangerous nature of machine-guns.

In Cape Town, again, Natives demonstrated before Parliament against the Riotous Assemblies Bill, which aimed at curtailing the work of "agitators".

The most recent Native riots happened at Vereeniging, the town where, in 1902, Briton and Boer had signed the treaty that concluded the Anglo-Boer War. In September of 1937 fighting broke out between Natives and the police, and a number on both sides were killed or in-

jured. The official commission of enquiry found that the main cause of the outbreak was resentment by the Natives of the use of the patrol van and of rough handling of Natives by the police in using it, while "contributing causes of the outbreak were friction between the police and the Natives, resulting from the enforcement by the former of the liquor laws". There were no grounds, said the commission, for blaming communist agencies. The recommendations of the commission include the more careful use of the patrol van so as not to give the Natives grounds for believing that "it is an instrument of oppression", and the "enforcement of the prohibition of the carrying of sjamboks by police officers on duty". The whole report of the commission reveals a state of affairs that is truly frightening. It is obvious from the report that the Natives do, in fact, consider the patrol vans as instruments of oppression, and the commissioners seem to share this belief; it is also obvious that the police illegally carry sjamboks (heavy whips) while on duty. If the excellent recommendations of the commission are carried into effect there will be less indiscriminate and, on the whole, useless, rioting.

#### 4. OTHER BANTU ORGANISATIONS

Apart from separatist Bantu churches, which were mentioned previously as representing, however dimly, a desire for freedom, there are a large number of African organisations in existence. Some of these are of local significance only; some, such as the Cape Native Voters' Convention and the Natal Native Congress, are of provincial importance. Many of the organisations are spasmodic, and membership fluctuates violently; like similar European societies, they depend overmuch on a few capable men and women. None of these societies has much influence either with the mass of the Natives or with the authorities, and their lack of authority with their own race is largely due to the fact that they are sectional in their interests and make no appeal to the workers; they are, in fact, *petit bourgeois* organisations that hardly touch the real problems except by an occasional extravagant resolution that leads nowhere. None of these organisations can be considered as "dangerous" by the European population.

Of more significance is the All African Convention, that met for the first time in 1935. It is a convention of conventions, and has a very wide list of affiliated societies, such as the Cape African Congress, the I.C.U., the Clothing Workers' Union of Johannesburg, the African Ministers' Association, the Ciskei Native Chiefs' Convention, and the Communist Party at Johannesburg. The objects of the Convention as set out in its draft constitution are:

"(a) To act in unity in approaching the Government or other authorities on matters affecting the welfare of Africans.

"(b) To advance the economic interests of the African peoples.

"(c) To employ constitutional means in all its affairs."



The inaugural conference of the Convention, held at Bloemfontein in 1935, met under the shadow of the impending legislation which would deprive the Cape Native voters of their common franchise with the Europeans; but it found time to deal with such matters as urban areas, the permit system, grievances against oppressive laws, and the poll tax. Also, an African Council of Women was established by the wives of the delegates to the conference.

It is significant that the executive committee of the Convention consists almost entirely of the intelligentsia, men such as Mr. Jabavu, the President, who is a lecturer at Fort Hare, Dr. Xuma, Dr. Moroka, and Rev. Mahabane. Kadalie and Champion, the old I.C.U. leaders, were present, but were not elected to any of the committees.

The Convention passed a unanimous resolution of sympathy with Abyssinia as the victim of a predatory Fascist Italy; and a telegram from Moscow was greeted with applause. But, though the conference was anti-European in its general tone, it can hardly be described as revolutionary or socialist. Nor is there much prospect of the Convention becoming a real force among Africans, because it represents too many divergent middle-class Bantu interests and is out of touch with the masses; there is, indeed, a left wing to the Convention, but it is small and has little influence. What may be expected, therefore, is that the Convention will be a means of bringing together Africans from different parts of the country, and a nationalist spirit may develop as a result of its activities. Also, it will act as a channel through which reforms may be demanded and worked for.

The African National Congress, established in 1912, is another nationwide society. It is chiefly political, but of late years it has paid a great deal of attention to social and economic matters. Its most recent meeting was held at Bloemfontein in December 1938, and it discussed, among other items, the founding of an independent Bantu Press, the establishment of a co-operative bank, Native administration, wages, and the need for appointing someone in England to counteract propaganda against Natives in the Union; this last item was discussed in relation to the proposal to hand the British Protectorates to the Union. The Congress has lost much of its former power, partly because of provincial and tribal differences; it has, in fact, ceased to be truly national. One speaker maintained that the weakness of the Congress was its divorce from the masses, but the majority of the members would certainly not agree with him, since the African National Congress is, like so many other Native societies, almost exclusively occupied with its own middle-class interests. Nor can these societies, at the present stage, be entirely blamed for this. So much time and energy are taken up in fighting for Bantu middle-class privileges that it would be strange if any were left for thinking about the working-class, except in somewhat abstract and general terms.

There is one movement which it is in place to discuss here, though it

is by no means specifically Native, and though it has its origin in America. It is called the Watch-Tower Movement, and it is religious in character, basing its beliefs on the second coming of Christ. The writings of J. F. Rutherford, apparently the founder of the sect, are full of the more sanguinary texts torn from the Scriptures to prove that "religion (that is, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches) are an integral part of Satan's organisation". One of Rutherford's most recent outpourings is a book called *Riches*, in which he prophesies the destruction of all who are not Jehovah's witnesses, another name for the devotees of the Watch-Tower. "The fact", he says, "that the clergy have joined hands with the political and financial interests of the world, all of which is under Satan, is proof conclusive that Satan has entrapped them and is using them for his own purpose". So much for the churches. Regarding Governments, he urges his followers to obey those laws that are right but not those that are wrong, though he omits to add a classified list. The writings are anti-Fascist and anti-Nazi; but they are also anti-Communist, anti-everything that is not Watch-Tower. An advertisement at the back of the book says that since the time (Armageddon) is very near at hand (it was written before the present war), when gold and silver will be useless, it is wise to give some now, while there is still time, in exchange for real riches—namely, the writings of J. F. Rutherford.

It may well be imagined that writings and teachings such as these are considered dangerous by the Government, and the Witnesses of Jehovah are carefully watched. It is difficult to say how many adherents they have in the Union, since the movement is practically a secret society; in Northern Rhodesia their influence was at one time considerable, and gave the Government much anxiety. A movement such as this is, indeed, dangerous from every point of view, and anyone who attempted to make use of its anti-European character for propaganda purposes would be criminally foolish. Simple-minded Natives are attracted by it into useless actions against the Government; and no Native movement built up on such fantastic perversions and vague economics can be of any real use to Africans. The whole thing is a dangerous patent-religious racket, and the sooner Native leaders warn their followers against it the better.

##### 5. A NON-EUROPEAN UNITED FRONT

Labour in South Africa is divided, and its trade union energies dissipated, by racial differences; and only when a united labour front of the workers of all races and colours can be formed will a brake be put on ruling-class exploitation. In the meantime, what are the chances for success of the Non-European United Front which has recently (1938) been formed?

The threat of separate residential areas for Asiatics and Coloureds roused those two groups to action and made them realise more clearly that, ultimately, all colours are in danger from the ruling white. Con-

ferences have been held, resolutions passed, and a good deal of steam blown off. At a big meeting at Johannesburg banners were displayed with the slogans "We want decent homes", "Down with the segregation bills", "Abolish pass laws", and "Abolish Poll Tax". It is very unlikely, however, that Indian and Coloured workers will risk their own economic gain to help the Natives abolish the pass laws. The Natives, on the other hand, are still less likely to risk striking for the benefit, as they see it, of the Coloureds and Indians, who are already far more free than the Natives themselves. In any case, to advocate a Non-European United Front is to fail to realise that it is not, in South Africa or elsewhere, a question of colour, but one of exploitation under capitalism; to attempt to line up on the basis of colour is to neglect the economics of the situation.

As a political movement a non-European Front which includes the voteless Natives and Indians of the northern provinces will be weaker by having to carry an inert mass; its forces will the more easily be dealt with by the politicians, who will be able to create a defeatist spirit by separating the issues of poll tax and residential areas; to use military terms, the front is too wide for either defence or attack. From the Coloured and Indian point of view a narrow front on a few well-defined issues will be much more effective; and it is doubtless something like this that Gandhi, an astute tactician, had in mind when he advised the Indians to fight their own battles.

The most that can be said for a Non-European United Front is that it may accustom some of the Native, Indian, and Coloured workers to act together. If, after that, they are able to combine with socialist European Trade Unions, something useful will have come out of the Front. No movement based specifically on colour, whether white or non-white, has any hope of lasting success.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE UNION'S COLONIES

#### I. INTRODUCTORY

**B**ASUTOLAND, the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and Swaziland, are British possessions, known collectively as the High Commission Territories, and for many years their administration was vested, first in the Governor of the Cape Colony, and from 1910 in the Governor-General of the Union. Since 1930, however, when the status of the Union began to assume its present form, the two offices were separated, and His Majesty's High Commissioner is now appointed direct from London, though the Union Government is no doubt consulted about the appoint-

ment. It is these territories that South African statesmen are asking Great Britain to hand over to the Union.

Another territory in which the Union is vitally and directly interested is South-West Africa, a former German colony over which the Union holds a mandate from the League of Nations. Hitler has been claiming this territory for some time, and his claim is resisted by most South African politicians and statesmen.

## 2. BASUTOLAND

Of the three High Commission Territories, Basutoland has been longest under British control. It was never conquered because its able chief, Moshesh, avoided conquest by appealing for the protection of Britain in 1865, when it was on the point of succumbing to the Boer Republic of the Free State. This appeal did not fall on deaf ears, and in 1868 the territory became a Crown Colony. Britain did, indeed, try to pass the buck to the Cape Colony, and between 1871 and 1884 Basutoland was ruled by the self-governing Cape; but an attempt, in 1881, to disarm the tribesmen led to a rebellion which was never really suppressed, and in 1884 the Colonial Office, acting through the Governor at the Cape, resumed responsibility.

To-day Basutoland, a country about the size of Belgium, is a Native Reserve with a Basuto population of about 560,000 people; the 1,400 Europeans who live there are Government officials, missionaries, labour agents, and traders, and they are not permitted to own land privately. About half the country is mountainous, but the other half is fertile, and has an average rainfall of about 30 inches a year, subject to the customary South African droughts. There is no private ownership of land, and the chiefs apportion fields for ploughing; grazing is communal. Lest the incautious reader should assume that Basutoland is a communist State, it may be added that the actual production of crops is an individual matter, and that, in practice, Native communalism is a wasteful method of production. It falls between two stools. It is, on the one hand, not planned socialised production, nor, on the other hand, has it the merits of production under private ownership of land.

Cattle, sheep, horses, maize, wheat, barley, oats, and other crops, all find favourable climatic conditions in Basutoland. Soil erosion has played havoc with the fertility of the land, but in recent years, since 1935, the administration has made more determined efforts to combat this evil.

It is, at first sight, strange to read that the imports of Basutoland—about £750,000—are more than double her exports; but we soon realise that her greatest export is not officially mentioned as such. It is labour power. About 54,000 Basuto men are to be found at any one moment in labour districts in the Union, and about 43,000 of these are on mines alone. In other words, about 50% of the adult males are usually absent from the territory, and we shall not be surprised to learn, therefore, that

the country, good as are the climate and the soil, does not produce enough maize or kaffir-corn for the needs of its inhabitants. In 1937, a good harvest year, 55,000 bags of maize and maize meal were imported from the Union. Literally, the breadwinners were absent digging for gold for the European population of the Union and for the benefit of British shareholders. Apart from its effects on agricultural production, this absence of adult males has the usual serious effects in dislocating family life and in retarding educational progress; young children must work in the fields, since food is more important than a knowledge of the alphabet. The cash value to Basutoland of this "invisible export" cannot be much less than about £500,000 a year, and she may therefore be said to have a "favourable trade balance". The real value to Basutoland of this trade in man-power must be estimated in other, and less favourable terms, such as under-production and social dislocation.

There are no industries in Basutoland, and, though there are good reasons for presuming the presence of minerals, the Basuto have always been opposed to prospecting. In the light of the experience of the Natives in Kenya when gold was discovered, the Basutos cannot be blamed for having consistently acted on the assumption that the proved presence of minerals might be too strong a temptation to the white man to break his promise of leaving the Native in undisturbed possession of his ancestral lands.

There are about 200 trading stations in Basutoland where the Basutos sell their produce for export and buy blankets, clothing, prints, and food-stuffs; a good deal of the trade is done by barter, and the Basutos, having no adequate storage for their crops, are accustomed to sell to the trader produce that they will eventually have to buy back from him at an enhanced price. The traders thus act as banks which provide credit and cash against crops, a system that bears hardly on the Native and could easily be obviated by a system of Government marketing. Since 1936 Natives may obtain licences to trade, but they are prohibited from trading in wool, mohair, and live-stock.

The annual revenue is about £350,000, of which Native tax accounts for 43% and customs and excise for 34%. Expenditure usually balances revenue, and the largest item is for education, about £60,000, of which about £3,000 is spent on education for European children, including grants to officials for the education of their children outside the territory.

The Native tax is a poll-tax of £1 5s. on every adult male, together with an education tax of 3s. Polygamy is taxed at the rate of £1 5s. for every additional wife, with a total maximum of £3 15s. per taxpayer. This taxation works out at about 7s. per head of population, and helps to account for the large number of Basutos who have to earn cash wages outside the territory; unless they did they would be unable to pay their taxes. Europeans pay an income tax of about £2 10s. per head of population.

The postal system of Basutoland is managed by the Union administration, and the one mile of railway which connects the capital, Maseru, with the Union, is controlled by the South African Railways. South African Reserve Bank notes and Union silver and copper coin are legal tender, and the Standard Bank of South Africa operates at Maseru. Customs duties on goods imported from overseas are collected by the Union administration at its ports and a fixed proportion is paid over to the Basutoland administration. In effect, Basutoland's fiscal policy is tied to that of the Union.

The territory is administered by a Resident Commissioner, with district commissioners for each of the seven districts. Wards, a subdivision of the district, are under chiefs who are all of the Moshesh family, the so-called "Sons of Moshesh". They have administrative and judicial powers, they allocate land, receive the customary free labour of their subjects, and are subsidised by the Government. The Paramount Chief of Basutoland has great authority and power, and the administration seldom acts against his wishes. The Basutoland Council, an advisory body, consists of ninety-five chiefs or nominees of chiefs and five commoners nominated by the administration. The policy of the British Government has always been to uphold the power of the chiefs, at whatever expense, and the result is that necessary reforms are obstructed or delayed by the Council, a body of men who represent themselves; it is as if the House of Lords alone ruled Britain. The chiefs are, as a rule, uneducated, jealous of each other, and jealous of their own power; they are conservative, and regard progressive commoners as dangerous and subversive. They use their powers of inflicting fines to enrich themselves at the expense of their wealthier subjects.

In 1938 the Basutoland Council debated a motion that the Councillors should be elected by the people, and not nominated by the Paramount Chief. The principal spokesman against the motion, which is a hardy annual, contended that it would be an infraction of the constitution; the man who should be responsible for the appointment of Councillors was the "Owner of Basutoland", the Paramount Chief and the administration. Only four councillors voted for the motion. On the other hand, the debate on stock theft resulted in a large majority for the proposal that Government should be asked to increase the punishment for stock theft and to inflict corporal punishment on those found guilty of it. These two debates are symptomatic of the real nature of the Government that stands behind a façade of "letting them rule themselves". In reality it is the chiefs who rule, with the strong backing of the British Government. Young and educated Basutos have little scope in an administration run by the "owners of Basutoland", who, together with the mines and industries of the Union, exploit the labour of Basutoland. It must be added that there are few signs that the mass of the Basutos resent the authority of the chiefs. On the contrary, they are exceedingly loyal to

them, and even the young progressives do not feel much resentment at having to perform work for the chiefs.

Justice is administered by the Resident Commissioner's court, the courts of district commissioners and assistant district commissioners, and by the chiefs' courts; final appeal lies in the Privy Council in England. Basuto customary law, as codified in the Laws of Lerothodi, a former Paramount Chief, is applied in all courts, both civil and criminal; customary law may be altered by proclamation. Europeans need not be tried by a chief's court unless they choose to. In practice Native criminal law has been considerably modified, while civil law has not been much interfered with.

There are eight hospitals, with a total of 204 beds, in Basutoland; the territory is thus much better off in this respect than the Native Reserves in the Union, but not quite so well off as the urban areas. Educational facilities are provided by Government-aided mission schools, of which there are about 550 elementary schools, forty-three intermediate schools, and eleven teacher-training, technical, and industrial schools. All these provide accommodation for about 70,000 pupils, and in the matter of elementary education Basutoland is better off than the Union, even though more than 50% of the children of school-going age receive no instruction.

Anyone who has lived in the Union and visited Basutoland is struck by the dignified and independent bearing of the Basutos on their own native veld. There is little of the inferiority complex, either fawning or swaggering, that is so common in the Union. The Basuto is a proud nation, strong in its tradition of unity and in the knowledge that Basutoland is its home; no Basuto need carry a pass in his own country, and he is not made to feel that his rights are mere privileges, flung at him by the superior Europeans. In spite of manifest evils, Basutoland is a hopeful country. How much longer it will remain hopeful will depend on factors which will be analysed presently.

### 3. BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE

Just as Basutoland appealed for British protection when it was faced by the prospect of conquest by the Free State Boers, so the Bechuanaland Protectorate came under British control as the result of threatened conquest by the Transvaal Boers; but the time at which it happened (1885-1896) will tell us that British imperialism had by then taken a hand in the game of land-grabbing in Africa, and that Rhodes' ambition to control what he called "the neck of the bottle", the Suez Canal to the north, played at least as important a part as threatened aggression by the Boers.

In 1885 Khama and other Bechuana chiefs, in fear of the Boers and greatly encouraged by the British imperialists in South Africa, applied for British protection. It was granted, though the Colonial Office was

obviously suspicious of the direction the imperialists were taking. A Colonial Office minute (C.O. Desp. 9591 of 29/5/85) sarcastically remarks that Khama's "magnificent offer reads very much like an attempt to filibuster a large tract of country under pretence of an offer of it from a chief whose title would, to say the least, be warmly disputed". As usual, imperialism prevailed over Colonial Office scruples. In 1895 the southern portion of Bechuanaland was annexed to the Cape Colony, while Rhodes' British South Africa Company began to negotiate for the northern portion. The Jameson Raid and its repercussions compelled the British Government to break off these negotiations, and in 1896 the present Bechuanaland Protectorate administration was established; Rhodes' company received the right to construct a railway connecting the Cape Colony with Rhodesia. The Bechuana did not, therefore, get off as cheaply as the Basuto had done. Nor was the railway strip the only price they had to pay, for in 1895, when chiefs Khama, Sebele, and Bathoen visited England, they each had to surrender their rights and jurisdiction over certain large portions of the former tribal territory; these portions became crown lands, which made permanent European settlement possible. The result is that, while Europeans may not own land in Basutoland, land has to be reserved for Natives in Bechuanaland.

The territory of the Bechuanaland Protectorate is, to-day, three times the size of Great Britain, and has a population of about 265,000 people, of whom almost 2,000 are European officials, farmers, traders, and missionaries. Large portions of the territory are desert or semi-desert, where the nomadic Bushmen and Makalahari manage to exist by an everlasting struggle against drought and hunger. The eastern portion of the territory, though subject to severe droughts, is good ranching country and has an average rainfall of about 18 inches a year.

Unlike Basutoland, with its uniform population, Bechuanaland contains a number of tribes, such as the Bamangwato, the Bakhatla, the Barolong, and the Bakwena; there are also vassal tribes, such as the Masarwa, who are, for practical purposes, slaves. Each tribe has its own chief and tribal organisation, more or less strongly preserved, and the administration has demarcated Reserves for the different tribes.

There is, in Bechuanaland, the same discrepancy between imports and exports that we found in Basutoland; and it is accounted for in the same way. About 25% of the adult males are, at any given time, working in labour districts in the Union, and it is the export of their labour that balances imports and exports. There are, in the territory itself small gold and silver mines which draw a number of Natives away from their lands to earn the tax and to pay for blankets and clothes. Like Basutoland, too, the staple maize must be imported, since the country does not produce enough for its own needs.

In 1937 revenue was about £143,000, and, as is usual in the Protectorate, expenditure was almost £67,000 more. Customs, Native tax, and



income tax on Europeans, are the largest items of revenue, while police and medical services are the biggest single items under expenditure. The Native tax varies, but for 1938-1939 it was £1 per Native male over eighteen years of age, and an additional £1—with a maximum of £3—for each wife beyond the first. One quarter of the tax is paid into a Native Fund for welfare purposes, and, in addition to the ordinary tax, there is a tribal levy, varying from tribe to tribe, which is paid into a tribal treasury for the advancement of the interests of that tribe. About 10% of the value of the tax is paid to chiefs who assist in collecting it.

The postal system of Bechuanaland is controlled by the Union, and the telegraph and telephone system by the Government of Southern Rhodesia, except for a small section administered by the Union; the single railway line, connecting the Union with Southern Rhodesia, belongs to a private company, Rhodesia Railways, Ltd. South African currency is used; and a customs agreement with the Union provides for the collection of customs duties at Union ports and the annual payment of a lump sum to the protectorate administration. As with Basutoland, this has the effect of tying the Protectorate to the fiscal apron-strings of the Union, and, since the Union is highly protectionist for the sake of its industries, Bechuanaland, with no industries, suffers the disadvantages of protection without reaping any of its benefits. At the same time South Africa regards Bechuanaland as a foreign competitor in agricultural products and discriminates against it, particularly in the matter of the export of cattle into the Union.

With small and nominal differences, the administration of Bechuanaland is similar to that of Basutoland, and need not detain us here. The authority of the chiefs is, if possible, greater than in Basutoland, and, though there have been a few notable exceptions, the chiefs are arbitrary, conservative, and virtually unchecked. There are two advisory councils, a European Council consisting of twelve elected members, and a Native Council consisting of the chiefs and five representatives from each large tribe. Neither council has much influence.

Hospital facilities, education, missions, and welfare work are on much the same scale as in Basutoland. On the whole, the Bechuana are poorer and more backward than the Basutos; there is no national feeling, and tribal traditions and customs are strong, usually acting as a brake on more progressive methods of agriculture.

#### 4. SWAZILAND

Despite the fact that the independence of the Swazis had been guaranteed in two Conventions (1881 and 1884) between Great Britain and the Transvaal, the struggle for control of their country went on between these two European Powers. In 1890 a condominium of Swazis, British, and Boers set up a provisional government to deal with the situation that had arisen from the large number of concessions granted by the Swazi king to

Europeans, and in 1894 Great Britain recognised the Transvaal's right to "protect" Swaziland. When Britain conquered the Boers she took over the Swazis as part of the spoils of war, and the Governor of the Transvaal administered the territory until 1907, when it fell under the High Commissioner for South Africa.

Swaziland is the smallest of the three territories, being 6,704 square miles in area, or just half the size of Basutoland. It is exceptionally fertile and well-watered, but the great heat and the presence of malaria in the eastern low veld make that region unhealthy; the middle and high veld are excellent agricultural and stock-farming regions, and the good rainfall, together with the absence of frost, makes the country suitable for cotton, tobacco, and fruit. The total population is about 157,000, of whom close on 3,000 are Europeans; about two-thirds of the land is in the hands of European settlers, and, since the areas reserved for Natives are scattered, there is much more contact between Europeans and Natives than in the other two territories.

The administration has ceased to keep statistics of exports and imports, but the principal imports are maize and other foodstuffs, blankets, clothes, and what the official report calls "kaffir truck". The chief export is cassiterite tin, and, of course, the labour of about 20% of the adult males. There are no railways, but the Union administration operates a road motor service; the Union administers posts and telegraphs, customs, and currency, in the usual way.

The annual revenue of Swaziland in 1936 was about £105,000, and, as in the case of Bechuanaland, there is normally a deficit of about £30,000, which the Imperial Treasury makes good by way of grants-in-aid. Native tax accounts for 40% of the revenue, and customs for another 20%; veterinary and agricultural services cost £23,000—the biggest single item in expenditure—and are followed by medical services, public works, police, and education, in that order. The Native tax is £1 15s., and Natives with more than one wife pay an additional £1 10s. for each wife, to a maximum of £4 10s. Of each individual tax, 2s. is credited to the Swazi National Fund to be spent on Native welfare. Europeans pay an income tax which works out at the rate of about £1 per head of European population, as against 6s. per head, which is what the Native taxation comes to. It is interesting to note that, while the Europeans contribute about £3,000 in income tax, more than twice that amount is spent on European education; in fact, consideration of all taxation and expenditure in Swaziland leads to the conclusion that the Swazis are paying for the educational facilities which the Europeans enjoy. All that seems to be required now is a Swazi mission, supported by voluntary contributions from the Natives, to convert the Europeans.

In the matter of education, the Swazis have a smaller percentage of children at school than in Basutoland; presumably Native taxation is unable to support both white and black education. They also have less

hospital accommodation and poorer medical facilities than in Basutoland.

Administration is along the lines already described in the other territories. There is, unlike Bechuanaland, one race, with a Paramount Chief; but the Swazis have been deprived of so much of their land that they do not possess the same national pride that is found with the Basutos.

#### 5. THE UNION AND THE PROTECTORATES

The three High Commission Territories comprise a total area of about 293,000 square miles, or almost half the size of the Union; they have a European population of 6,000 and a Native population of close on 1,000,000. Two of the three territories are unable to pay their way; in all three exports are made to balance imports by the export of man-power, thus impoverishing the territories. Economically, all three territories are virtually controlled by the Union Government and are, in practice, South African colonies which serve as reservoirs of labour for the Union and help to keep down Native wages in Southern Africa. South Africa is, in the main, the only market for their goods, and most of their imports are from the Union or through Union ports. Strategically the possession of the territories would be of value to the Union only in the improbable event of a war between Great Britain and South Africa.

Having all the economic advantages of these colonies, the Union has none of the financial or other responsibilities connected with imperialism; and yet South African statesmen want Britain to hand over the Protectorates to the Union. General Hertzog, when Prime Minister, even uttered veiled threats of reprisals against the territories should Great Britain refuse. What has South Africa to gain by the political control and responsibility of territories over which she has an economic stranglehold? The arguments so far put forward are unconvincing—the need for a common policy to fight against animal and vegetable pests, the desire for a common Native policy, the theory that “the Natives of the territories have all the advantages (*sic*) of Union Natives with none of their corresponding financial obligations in the form of taxation”; certain sections of the press also speak vaguely about “rounding off our boundaries”. One Nationalist M.P. expressed a common sentiment when he said: “If only we can get rid of the imperialists we shall win back the respect of the kaffir and the coloured person which prevailed in the past.”

Once the question of transferring the government of the Protectorates to the Union had been raised, as it was some years ago, liberal opinion in Britain showed a pardonable hesitation in assisting the Union to obtain “a common Native policy”; and so national pride in South Africa was wounded because Britain was not prepared to entrust her with the care of Natives. It then became a matter of national honour to insist that the Union had a right to the territories and that she would make as good a job of administering them as England would. In these circumstances it is

highly probable that, sooner or later, a Tory Government in Britain would appease South Africa at no cost to Britain.

Though that section of European public opinion in the Union that wants the Protectorates transferred has not formulated any definite policy on the matter, thus leaving the electorates in Britain and in the Union in the dark as to what will happen once transfer has taken place, the real motives behind the demand are fairly obvious. Capitalism in the Union wants political control of its field of economic exploitation. Capital from the Union has already begun to look to future areas of investment, and the territories offer facilities in that direction; but capital investment is likely to await a more certain political control. Admittedly none of the territories, except perhaps Basutoland, offers particularly attractive terms for investment; but beggars can't be choosers, and a country that has entered the industrial race so late must take what it can find.

Another, and possibly more powerful, reason for the demand for transfer is a familiar one in South Africa: the desire for more land. Even an English liberal paper of the Rand suggested that Bechuanaland might form a very useful dumping ground for the "surplus population" (Native, of course) of the Union. Find land there for this surplus population and there will be no need to expropriate good farming land in the Union for them. In South Africa the Native was deprived of his land in the 19th century, and the territories partially escaped this wholesale enclosure movement by seeking British protection. The Basutos consequently still possess their land. It is this good land, "too good for the Natives", that Europeans feel they can put to better use; but as long as Britain controls Basutoland this cannot happen, or at least it is unlikely to happen. The pro-transfer party in South Africa naturally repudiates this suggestion that they want the Natives' land. General Hertzog spoke bitterly in Parliament of those negrophilists who urge Britain not to surrender the Protectorates; and the Nationalist Press has raised the cry of "Exeter Hall", so well known in the 19th century. But they have never yet given a convincing reason for wishing to take charge of territories that have all the present appearance of being a liability rather than an asset. Nor has the Government ever indicated, for example, that if it gained control Native rights would be scrupulously protected and that Europeans would not be admitted to land-ownership in Basutoland. It is asking rather too much to expect us to believe that South Africa, with its past and present record in Native policy, has purely altruistic motives for wishing to annex the territories. There are, of course, a great many Europeans in the Union who do not want the transfer of the Protectorates. Those are the people who do not think as highly of South African Native policy as its protagonists do, or who are not in possession of sufficient information to judge of the effects of transfer, or who fear that the Union's present power to prevent the agricultural producers of the Protectorates from

competing in Union markets will be destroyed if the territories become an integral part of South Africa. Native opinion in the Union is, so far as may be casually gathered, solidly opposed to transfer.

The High Commission Territories have always been orphans, rather than children, of the Empire, and their ultimate adoption by the Union was envisaged as far back as 1909, with the passage of the South Africa Act. To Britain, the territories are liabilities, except in so far as they provide a labour supply for the gold mines where British capital is invested. Considered apart from the Union, they have, for Britain, no strategic value; in any case, what value they have, strategically or financially, will not be lost to British investors by their transfer to the Union; nor will imperial pride suffer unduly. As things are now, Britain's record in the Protectorates is not such as to dazzle the beholder's eye by its success. Until 1936 the territories were treated largely on the basis of drift; provided there was no open rebellion, and provided the cost of maintenance was not too high, affairs were left to take their course; the reactionary powers of the Native chiefs were supported, and the mines were allowed to recruit as much labour as they pleased. In recent years there has been an undoubted improvement in administration, though the mischief done is by this time so deep-seated that it will take a policy just short of revolutionary to set things right. The Colonial Development Fund has been called in to finance capital expenditure to combat soil erosion in Basutoland and for the drilling of water bore-holes in Bechuanaland; instead of promoting police officers to the rank of district commissioner, the civil service is being brought into line with Colonial Office methods; some feeble attempts to check the arbitrary powers of the chiefs have even been contemplated. Suppose, however, that Great Britain sincerely wished to act as Trustee to the Natives of the territories, what would she do? Her first step would be to reduce recruiting for the mines to a maximum of 5% of adult males. There is no need to make any further suggestions. Governed as she is now, Great Britain will never dream of taking a step that will so adversely affect the profits of gold-mining.

Any capitalist Government in Britain will be in favour of transfer on the grounds that it has everything to gain and nothing to lose by such a step; it will appease South African opinion; Britain will cease to have financial responsibility for the territories; and the supply of Native labour for the mines will not have been endangered in any way. But the British Government will naturally have to square its conscience—in other words, to satisfy the electorate that all is for the best. The indications are that the ground is being carefully prepared for this, both in South Africa and in Britain. And it is no light task. The demand for the Protectorates was raised just at a time when South African Native policy was crystallising into its final form as one that enacted a permanent colour bar to citizenship. To offer to relieve Britain of the responsibility of governing the Natives of the Protectorates at the very moment that the Union was

stating so baldly what her own attitude towards Natives was to be, was tactless; and no doubt Mr. Thomas, then Secretary of State, found it so. However, his interview with General Hertzog took place during the Jubilee Celebrations and in an atmosphere made genial by a great display of imperialism; the official statements, accordingly, were able to reassure the British public by the liberal use of vague phrases such as "in good time" and "co-operation", and there the matter was allowed to rest for a while. Then in 1938, Mr. Malcolm MacDonald took a further step, and agreed to the establishment of a Standing Joint Advisory Conference to consist of officials of the Union and of the Protectorates; several people were unkind enough to suggest that this Conference would "facilitate ultimate transfer" by gradually persuading European and Native public opinion of the advantages of such a step. As a final step in preparation for transfer we may expect to find the idea being insinuated into the public mind in Great Britain that "the Union's Native policy is not so bad after all". In South Africa there is, of course, no need for such propaganda.

At various times Socialist M.P.s in the House of Commons have extracted promises from the Government that no transfer would take place "without consulting the wishes of the inhabitants". Those M.P.s are deluding themselves and the public by using, or accepting, a political phrase that can be twisted to suit any purpose, and they need express no surprise if they are ultimately told that the "inhabitants" desire to be transferred to the Union. A majority of the civilian European population of the Protectorates will probably vote for transfer; in any case, their opinion is reasonably easily ascertained. But what methods do you adopt to discover the wishes of the Native inhabitants of the Protectorates? A former Commissioner for Bechuanaland stated that the Natives were opposed to transfer because a meeting of chiefs had told him so. He was possibly right in his conclusion, but certainly wrong in his premises; for the chiefs do not represent the people, and the fact that the chiefs are practically unanimously opposed to transfer indicates nothing more than their fear that a salutary check will be placed on their capricious power by the Union administration. Other conclusions about the wishes of the inhabitants are already being drawn from statements made by people who are said "to know the Native mind"; these are equally fallacious guides. Finally, a plebiscite will be of little value among a backward people unaccustomed to European democratic forms. There is no need to labour the point. Since the continued existence of capitalist Governments in Britain and the Union makes transfer of the Protectorates a foregone conclusion, it does not really matter very much in what particular way the wishes of the inhabitants of the territories will be said to have been ascertained. The transfer will take place with the usual imperial fanfare, no matter what the inhabitants think.

It is, nevertheless, worth while to point out some of the factors involved

in transfer. Economically the inhabitants of the territories will be worse off under Union; their tax may be lower, but the eventual loss of land will not make up for this. Politically they will, presumably, have the pass system and all the colour-bar laws to comfort them for the loss of their land; their hope of citizenship will be damned.

There is one final point. Let no one in Great Britain comfort himself that he can agree to transfer on conditions safeguarding the Natives who now are ruled by Britain. A schedule to the South Africa Act did indeed, in contemplating transfer, make provision to safeguard Native vested interests by giving the Crown-in-Council the power to disallow legislation; but in those days the Crown was advised by its British Ministers. Under the Statute of Westminster, however, the Crown in South Africa is advised by its Union ministers. Furthermore, Parliament, in South Africa or in Britain, cannot bind its successor. Transfer will, therefore, have to be complete.

## 6. SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

German settlement in South-West Africa began in 1883, when the Luderitz Company of Bremen acquired a strip of territory from a Namaqualand Native chief. In 1885 the German Imperial Government granted a charter to the *Deutsche Kolonial Gesellschaft*, and this charter was exercised until 1892, when the Government itself took over the country, leaving the company its mining rights. By treaties with Native and Hottentot chiefs in 1884 the country had become a German Protectorate, which in those days meant that other nations recognised Germany's right to exploit it whenever she was in a position to do so. From 1892 colonisation began in earnest. Germans were settled on the land, the harbours of Luderitz and Swakopmund were established, and railways and roads were constructed. When the Germans took the country the Hereros (Bantu) and the Nama (Hottentot) were hereditary enemies, and the new Government restored peace by establishing its capital, Windhuk, between the two tribes.

There is hardly an instance in the history of Africa where the occupation of land by a European nation has not been followed by one or more desperate efforts on the part of the Natives to regain their lost rights. This process, usually known as "maintaining law and order" or "pacifying the country", is frequently a delayed one. In the early stages treaties are made with Native chiefs who do not understand what they are signing; later comes the realisation that what the innocent-looking treaty really meant was that the white man was to take possession of their lands, and then rebellion breaks out. German history in South-West Africa is no exception to this general rule. Her administration was seldom free from discontent of one sort or another, and in 1904 a major rebellion of a number of Bantu and Hottentot tribes broke out. This took three years to crush, and by the end of it the tribal organisation of the most

active Native group, the Hereros, was practically destroyed and its Paramount Chief driven to death in exile. Other tribes that had not been so active in rebellion, and whose lands were not quite so valuable, were left alone.

German rule came to an end in 1915, when the country was conquered by the South African forces after a brief campaign. That rule had done as much for South-West Africa as any other country would have done in similar circumstances; it was no better and no worse than the rule of any imperialist Government which exploits the land it has taken from Africans. It is fashionable to-day to pretend, with the statesmen of Versailles, that Germany's rule of her colonies was exceptionally cruel and harsh; as an excuse for not restoring her colonies to Germany, this is sheer national hypocrisy. There are many sound reasons why Hitler's Government should not be given a free hand with Natives or with Czechs, but Germany's colonial record is not one of these, unless we are prepared to use a similar excuse for depriving Belgium and Great Britain of their colonies on the grounds of the Congo atrocities or the Matabele war. In the matter of colonial record the safest policy for imperial Powers would perhaps be to assume that they live in glass houses.

Although the Armistice was signed on the basis of an "impartial adjustment of all colonial claims" and "the interests of the populations concerned", the Peace Conference at Versailles adopted other principles. As regards African colonies, the populations concerned, either Native or German, were certainly not consulted or considered; and as for impartial adjustments, British and South African statesmen had decided some time before the Armistice that German colonies had too great a strategic value to be restored. The invention of the Mandate system, in some ways a real advance on the old colonial system, enabled the Allied statesmen to achieve their ends without direct annexation. Thus South-West Africa came to be a territory governed by the Union under a C Mandate from the League of Nations.

South-West Africa is about 318,000 square miles in extent, or almost three-quarters the size of the Union. About 75% of it is either rainless desert or arid semi-desert, and only a small part of the country has a rainfall of more than 15 inches a year, thus making that part suitable for agriculture. There is a total population of about 358,000, of whom 262,000 are Natives, 65,000 Coloured, and about 30,000 European. The European population consists of 9,600 Germans, 18,000 Afrikaans-speaking, and 2,500 English-speaking South Africans. About 3,000 of the Germans are German nationals, and the rest are naturalised; in July 1939 an order was received from Germany urging its nationals not to apply for naturalisation.

The Native population comprises a number of Bantu, Hottentot, and Bastard tribes, and a few Bushmen. The Ovambo and the Okavango



are the two largest Bantu tribes, and live in big Reserves in the north of the territory. They are largely untouched by European civilisation and have not yet been brought out to work for their rulers; but a sentence in the *Official Year Book* says: "This system of Native administration (based on tribal organisation) may be said to serve a double purpose, in that it ensures a settled, contented population, and creates a potential labour-recruiting field for the future". It may be added, as a third purpose, that this breeding-ground of future labourers for the white man is also a very inexpensive form of administration, the education of the Ovambos, for example, costing the administration about £200 a year. There are about 120,000 Ovambos.

The Hereros, who suffered so severely at the hands of the Germans, have been given Reserves, and efforts have been made to reconstruct their tribal life; but their experiences of the white man, the loss of their cattle, and the break in tribal life, have impoverished and discouraged them, and they remain to-day broken in spirit and unwilling to respond to efforts on their behalf.

Among the Hottentots, the Bondelswarts have attracted most attention by reason of their rebellion in 1922. The Germans had suppressed them and exiled their leaders, Christian and Morris, who, rather naïvely, assumed that, since the Germans had been defeated, they would once more be allowed to lead their tribe. Against such simplicity the Union Government acted with determination. Christian and Morris were refused entrance to their ancient lands, and when they, notwithstanding the refusal, did return, an order was made for their arrest. Their followers refused to surrender them, and the Government sent a force of 450 men, armed with modern rifles, machine-guns, artillery, and aeroplanes. The Bondelswarts numbered 600 men with out-of-date rifles, but they managed to hold out, by avoiding engagement, for two weeks. Then the aeroplanes did their work, and over 100 men, women, and children were bombed to death. The League of Nations had to hear about it, but, as with war material, the Mandatory had better verbal and documentary equipment, and so the Bondelswarts lost all along the line. With imperialism, the more it changes, the more it is the same thing.

The chief labour force of the territory at present is the Berg Damara tribe. Liberated from virtual slavery to the Hereros and Nama by the Germans, they are to-day domestic servants and farm labourers.

Conditions regarding hospitals, social welfare, and education are, in principle, the same as in the Union, though the territory is, naturally, not as advanced as South Africa, with its larger and denser population. In education, for example, about £135,000 a year is spent on schools for Europeans and about £15,000 for non-Europeans. The system of Trust Funds has been introduced, as in the Union, where we saw that it was merely a method of making the Natives pay for their own services. The whole system of Native administration and finance approximates, in

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fact, more nearly to that of the Union than to that of Britain's Protectorates, and is an example of how the Union is likely to treat any other colonies that may be entrusted to her care. South Africa is moulding South-West Africa nearer to her heart's desire; vagrancy laws, pass laws, taxation, and the whole colour-bar structure, have become part and parcel of the administration of the territory which the League of Nations entrusted to the Union.

A Legislative Assembly of Europeans elected by Europeans has power to make ordinances subject to the approval of the Union Government; it may, however, not make ordinances on a long list of subjects, which includes Native affairs, mines, justice, railways, posts and telegraphs, military affairs, customs, currency, and banking. The control of these matters rests with the mother country, South Africa.

The territory normally imports goods to the value of about £2,000,000, the largest items being foodstuffs and textiles; the normal exports amount to about £3,700,000, of which hides and skins account for about 33%, diamonds about 25%; dairy products, copper, tin, and vanadium are also exported. Expenditure frequently exceeds revenue. Out of a total revenue of about £800,000, customs and excise account for nearly 25%, showing how South-West Africa has its cost of living increased in order to encourage Union industries. Direct Native taxes are a small proportion of the whole, probably not more than 2%. The largest item under expenditure is for interest and redemption on loans, a natural item of colonial expenditure; after that comes education. The expenditure on the non-European population is probably larger than its contribution to revenue.

## 7. THE NAZIS

The technique of Nazi propaganda abroad is too well-known by now to make it necessary to describe in any great detail how it operates in the Union and in South-West Africa. There are, in those two countries, numerous Germans, and it would be surprising if the Hitler regime were to neglect the obvious excuse that a lost colony presents for intensive propaganda. Further, the Foreign Section of the Nazi propaganda organisation was, until the beginning of the present war (and, for all we know to the contrary, still is), under the direction of a man who has a personal interest in South Africa. He is Herr Bohle, the son of Prof. Bohle, formerly of the University of Cape Town. In 1932, even before Hitler came to power, Herr Bohle established the *Landesgruppe Süd-afrika*, and he is said still to take a great personal interest in South Africa, though it is only one of the many countries that fall under his department.

Nazi propaganda with regard to the return of South-West Africa to Germany takes three main forms: general colonial propaganda, propaganda in the Union, and propaganda in the territory itself. The first

of these forms is well known to most readers ; the second will be reserved for the next paragraph. As regards South-West Africa itself, there are about 3,000 German nationals living in the territory ; of the remaining Germans (about 6,000) it is difficult to say in how far their sympathies lie with the Hitler Government, since an active Nazi organisation in the territory was able to cause considerable hardship to Germans who did not express Nazi sentiments ; this hardship may vary between social ostracism and the persecution of relatives in Germany.

Since September of 1939 the Union, and therefore South-West Africa, has been at war with Germany ; the activities of the Nazi party have therefore been curtailed and some of the most active agents have been interned. There is little doubt, however, that the work of propaganda still goes on, and it is necessary to give some further details of how it works. The party is, naturally, subsidised from home, and takes its instructions from the same headquarters. Its activities became so great a menace that the Union Government appointed a commission of investigation in 1936. The report revealed the existence of Nazi cells, Labour Front Groups, Hitler Youth Cadres, and Winter Help Centres, not only in South-West Africa, but also in the Union ; it also found that "as a result (of the Nazi Foreign Organisation) freedom of speech, of political association and even of personal conduct had ceased to exist in the territory for a large number of Germans who are entitled to the protection of the Mandatory against such infringement of their rights".

The Union Government, on this report, declared the Nazi organisation illegal ; but, though the wearing of uniforms and the open demonstrations have ceased, the intensive campaign goes on more or less secretly. In the crisis of March 1939 the Union Government, probably acting on information received from London, drafted a body of 400 Union police to South-West Africa to deal with positive difficulties if war broke out. In October of 1938 Dr. H. Hirsekorn, leader of the *Deutscher Südwestbund*, returned from Europe and made an appeal to all Germans to join the *Bund* ; recent events in Europe (Czechoslovakia) had convinced him that the Germans in South-West Africa should unite to promote their *German* interests. This and other statements make it fairly clear that the Nazi party in Germany and in South-West Africa was fairly confident that the territory would once more become a German colony, probably without an actual war. Britain's belated determination to stand firm against further Nazi aggression has, of course, destroyed the prospects of a peaceful conquest and diminished the prospects of ultimate occupation.

The large majority of the 20,000 English and Afrikaans citizens of the Union who have settled in South-West Africa are opposed to the return of the territory to Germany, and a South-West Africa League was recently formed by them to preserve Union authority and to disseminate "correct information"—in other words, to make counter-propaganda ;

what they really want is full incorporation with the Union, as a fifth province. Many of these people are moved by a genuine dislike of Nazi methods, of which they have had some experience. An additional incentive is that they have invested a considerable amount of capital in the territory; since private property in South-West Africa was confiscated after the Great War, they not unnaturally fear that a victorious Germany will not be less lenient than the Allies were in 1918.

Politics in South-West Africa tend to follow the Union's pattern, and the few Nationalists who live there are in the same awkward position, in regard to their attitude towards returning the colony to Germany, as the Nationalist Party in the Union. That position will be dealt with presently.

As regards the non-Europeans, their wishes will in any case not be consulted, and it is impossible to tell which they would prefer, Germany or the Union. All that can be said with certainty is that they will form an admirable excuse to persuade anti-imperialists against any policy of returning the territory to Germany. The fact that the people who will use the Native as a pretext are not, as a rule, unduly concerned with his welfare should not, of course, blind anti-imperialists to the true facts of the situation. Though it is not part of the object of this book to deal with the problem of satisfying Germany's colonial claims, it is necessary to say here that, while all imperialism is abhorrent, no socialist can contemplate with equanimity the handing over of a colonial area to the government of a country whose Leader refers to Africans as "ape-headed creatures", whose policy is professedly and profoundly racial, and whose record of barbarous persecution in its own country is a matter of public boast. Germany's fitness to govern colonies need not be judged on past colonial record, but on the present standards adopted by the Hitler regime.

### 8. THE ATTITUDE OF THE UNION

Until the outbreak of war with Germany, in September of 1939, Nazi activities in the Union followed the usual pattern and radiated from the office of the German Consul-General. Since the declaration of war the open propaganda by German Nazi agents has ceased and a number of the agents have been interned; but more or less veiled propaganda by Afrikaner sympathisers goes on, and the broadcasts from Germany have, if anything, been intensified. A good deal of this propaganda is stupid and demonstrably inaccurate, but it finds a ready field in the minds of anti-British Nationalists.

There are in South Africa a large percentage of German nationals and of naturalised Germans, and in the early days of the Hitler regime, South African Germans, intensely loyal to their land of origin, welcomed the apparent rejuvenation of Germany; religious persecutions of both Catholics and Protestants, an influx of refugees from Germany, and the

gradual realisation of the true nature of the regime have, however, damped their ardour, and Hitler's treatment of Pastor Niemöller has proved an effective antidote to virulent Nazi propaganda. A fair number of South African Germans were, from the beginning, opposed to Hitler, and it is suspected that a much larger number are of the same opinion, but remained quiet rather than risk reprisals on their relatives in Germany or Austria. Most Germans in South Africa are still greatly attached to the conception of the Fatherland and all that it connotes for them, but it is doubtful whether a free vote would reveal a substantial "minority" for Hitler to rescue.

More important than the attitude of the Germans is that of the English and Afrikaners on the question of war with Germany. Up till September 1939 the United Party was led by General Hertzog and General Smuts. The former had strenuously opposed the attack, on behalf of the Empire, on South-West Africa in 1914, while the latter had helped to conquer it. In the United Party Cabinet and among the Government supporters were men who had rebelled in 1914 and hoped for German intervention on their behalf; there were also men who helped Britain to increase her colonial empire. This party, which had more than 100 out of the 150 seats in the Assembly, was definitely committed to fighting to save South-West Africa for the Union, and in this policy it had the support of the vast majority of European citizens of South Africa.

While South Africa was pretty well unanimous about defending South-West Africa against attack by Germany, she was sharply divided on the question of declaring war against Germany if South-West Africa was not directly threatened; when Britain declared war, therefore, a split occurred in the Cabinet and in the country. General Smuts, supported by his own followers from the old South African Party, and by the Dominion Party, the Labour Party, and the representatives of the Natives, formed a Government and declared war against Germany, while Dr. Malan and General Hertzog opposed him. General Smuts is supported by practically all the English and by a fair minority of Afrikaners; his policy is to keep South Africa in the Commonwealth of Nations at all costs. The opposition is now united in favour of a Republic that will not be dragged at the chariot wheels of the Empire, but it is still divided as to when the Republic should arrive; and it has apparently not yet discovered that political independence is not economic independence.

In the matter of supporting England at war the attitude of the Nationalist Party is clear, if inconsistent. When it comes to the question of South-West Africa, however, the Nationalists are in an awkward predicament. True to its old tradition of having opposed the conquest of South-West Africa, and realising more clearly than most that the present world situation is caused by rival imperialisms, the Nationalist Party is anxious to avoid any appearance of being prepared to fight for Britain and Empire.

At the same time, it knows full well that its followers will be loath to lose South-West Africa or to have Germany once more on the Union's borders. Nationalist leaders, especially the younger fire-brands, are apt to be pro-German, but it is largely a matter of being anti-British—the enemies of my enemies are my friends; it is, however, very doubtful whether more than a small minority of them would welcome German occupation of the Union, a likely event if Germany once more obtains a foothold in South-West Africa. They admire Hitler, and their admiration grows as he is vilified by the Jews and the English; but it is admiration at a distance. Those of them who travelled abroad before the outbreak of war in September returned with marvellous tales of the efficiency of German methods and pooh-poohed the existence of concentration camps as figments of the anti-Hitler imagination; but they would not welcome concentration camps in South Africa.

German broadcasts in Afrikaans naturally appeal to the Nationalists' pride of language, and the B.B.C. receives no credit for similar broadcasts because it merely copied the Germans; and so German propaganda finds an easy passage into the minds of the anti-English Afrikaners. The patriotic fervour of the English-speaking citizens, their damning of trade relations with Germany before the war, the "Buy British" attitude of urban municipalities, all help to strengthen the conviction of the Nationalists that the whole business is an imperialist ramp with which a true Afrikaner should have nothing to do.

The Nationalist analysis of the situation as a rivalry between two imperialisms is, of course, fundamentally correct. Unfortunately, it does not go far enough. Some Nationalists do admit that, even under imperialism, a certain amount of freedom is preferable to a dictatorship; when Germany annexed Czechoslovakia outright, the Nationalist Press condemned the action on the grounds that, till then, Germany had merely redressed the Treaty of Versailles and taken what was German; now she was annihilating the freedom of a non-German people. The Afrikaner is a rugged individualist, by nature and by tradition, and the Nationalist Party is probably quite sincere and correct when it declares it will fight to a man if South Africa is attacked by Germany. What it objects to is fighting on behalf of Great Britain, and it does not realise that, in this case, fighting for Great Britain happens to be fighting for South African independence.

Compounded of such elements, the Nationalist Party have had to compromise on the question of South-West Africa. This they have done in various ways. One way is to say that, whatever South Africa does, the decision will rest on the battlefields of Europe, and South Africa will be informed after the decision has been taken. At the Nationalist Party Congress in November 1938, Dr. Malan, leader of the Party, argued as follows: the Treaty of Versailles was unjust, and you cannot prevent German colonial expansion; but as regards South-West Africa, the

wishes of the majority must be taken into account; the wrong way to tackle the problem is to say "what we have we hold", and the Nationalist Party, while not prepared to surrender South-West Africa, wished "to settle the matter by friendly co-operation with Germany". This statement was greeted with loud cheers. Dr. Malan did not stop to explain what he meant by "the wishes of the majority", but, presumably, he referred to the European population of South-West Africa, in which case he was quite safe. Nor did he say what would happen in the likely event of "friendly co-operation" failing to achieve a settlement.

Another Nationalist leader is Mr. Werth, who is of German descent, and who was at one time Administrator of South-West Africa. Speaking at the Party Congress in Natal in November 1938, he said that he personally was opposed to the return of the territory to the Germans; the Afrikaners had developed the country, and it should belong to them.

More recently, in June 1939, the Nationalist Party expressed itself in favour of neutrality in case of a European war unless South Africa were directly attacked; also, while they would use all peaceful means to retain it, they would resist every attempt to let the Union be dragged into a war because of South-West Africa. As one Nationalist Party organ said: "We do not regard the retention of South-West Africa, which did not belong to us, as worth a war. But because the natural destiny of the territory lies with the Union, because of the economic advantages of South-West Africa itself, and because of the many Union citizens there, we seek a solution in the voluntary and final surrender of the territory by Germany, who can in any case reap no benefit from it and can be compensated by much more valuable colonies elsewhere and by arrangements by which she can acquire raw materials."

Now that war has been declared against Germany the Nationalist Party are on a safe, if rather cowardly, wicket in regard to the question of South-West Africa. They are quite correct in arguing that the question will ultimately be decided in Europe; subconsciously, of course, they are banking on a victory for Britain, in which case there will be no need to fight for South-West Africa. If Germany cannot break through in Europe she cannot attack South-West Africa or the Union, and the Nationalists are realist enough to know that, with a major European war in progress, Germany or Italy is unlikely to be in a position to spare aeroplanes for the useless bombing of South African towns. The Nationalist leaders can therefore reassure their followers by damning the Government for assisting Britain and the Empire in time of war, and at the same time feel comparatively safe from the danger of having to fight for South-West Africa. That other people are fighting their battles does not worry them. Nor are they in any way interested in the larger issues involved in the war.

When the last imperialist war broke out in 1914 an attempt was made to establish a republic in South Africa. What are the prospects of a

similar attempt during the present war? For a short time, in the early days of September, many people feared a rebellion, and if the split in the United Party had not occurred there was every chance that a hot-headed minority would have revolted; General Hertzog's resignation, while strengthening the republican opposition in Parliament, probably acted as a brake on those who might have rebelled. There is still a great deal of seditious material lying around, and the flames are fanned by the nightly broadcasts from Germany. Republican sentiment in South Africa was greatly strengthened in 1938 by the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek, and again in 1939 by the celebrations of the coming of the French Huguenots, who fled for liberty. One of the results of the trek celebrations was the establishment of a semi-secret organisation known as the *Ossewa Brandwag* (literally, the Ox-wagon Sentry). It has distinct military leanings, and adopts the old commando principle of the Republics and a uniform modelled on the Voortrekker dress of 100 years ago; the central organisation and its financial origins are shrouded in mystery, though the Government is said to be watching it closely. Each province has a general and each district a commandant; camps are to be held where there will be physical exercises and drill; Voortrekker dress will be worn at the camps. It is popularly believed that a number of Defence Force and police officers were involved, but when General Smuts took charge of the Government and of the portfolio of Defence, he made a fairly clean sweep. The organisation of the *Ossewa Brandwag* is, from all that is allowed to appear, much more authoritarian than the old Republican military commandos, which were essentially democratic; this fact, and others, lend colour to the well-founded suspicion that the whole organisation is related to the Nazi party, ideologically and financially.

There are other secret and semi-secret Afrikaans societies, all under the cloak of cultural movements; and, although the Nationalist leaders have been loud in proclaiming that they aim at a Republic along constitutional lines, there is no knowing when some action on the part of the Government may not drive the rank and file of the republicans into open revolt. At the moment (October 1939) the Union is not deeply involved in the war, and the opposition is confining itself to saying that General Smuts' declaration of war has sealed the fate of the Empire as far as South Africa is concerned; a republic, they say, is now certain.

In the rebellion in 1914 there were military leaders from the Anglo-Boer War days. General de Wet could reckon on a large following of former comrades-in-arms and of younger men who had grown up to revere his name and fame. Now there are political leaders like Dr. Malan, but there is no political-military leader of the calibre of General de Wet. The nearest approach is General Manie Maritz, who assumed a leading part in the last rebellion and took a large number of Defence Force troops over to the German side. Since then Maritz has been in



close touch with Germany, and is known to be strongly under Nazi influence. He recently published a book, in execrable Afrikaans, called *My Lewe en Strewe* (My Life and Struggle—in other words, *Mein Kampf*), which contains the customary anti-Jewish vapourings. The book was banned in South-West Africa, and the general was recently tried and convicted for selling it secretly. Those who know what large numbers of people swallowed Hitler's political theories will not be surprised to learn that Maritz has a considerable following; but as a Führer he need not be taken very seriously.<sup>1</sup>

There are, apart from the supporters of General Smuts, other anti-republican forces in the country. Socialists and Communists are, with a few exceptions, in the same predicament as elsewhere. They realise that wars are the result of capitalist imperialism, and do not desire to support such a war; but if they must choose between Fascism and so-called democratic imperialism, they are bound to support the latter. Also, they would infinitely prefer a semi-British South African Dominion to a Boer Republic based on racial and religious principles.

The non-European population is politically impotent, but the vocal sections of the Coloured, Indian, and Bantu people are all anti-republican and anti-Fascist. The mass of the Bantu are indifferent to a war whose implications they cannot see, and it is unlikely that any South African statesman will try to use Natives in suppressing rebellion. Nevertheless, the African masses constitute an anti-Fascist force.

Such, then, is the alignment of political forces in the Union and in South-West Africa with regard to war and the return of Germany's colonies. On the whole, the chances of the establishment of a republic, either by force or by constitutional means, are slender. Though the republicans may cause much senseless damage, they are not unitedly pro-German, they are not, numerically, in the majority, they are weak in leadership, and they are economically far weaker than their opponents.<sup>2</sup>

## 9. SOUTH AFRICAN IMPERIALISM

Whether a rebellion to establish an Afrikaner republic does or does not result from war in Europe, it is quite certain that neither the followers of

<sup>1</sup> General Maritz died in 1940.

<sup>2</sup> Since these lines were written there have been various changes: (a) The Union has become more deeply involved in the war. The South African Army defended Kenya, helped to re-conquer Abyssinia, and has played a big part in the war in the Middle East. It also serves as an R.A.F. training ground. (b) The Communists are now (since June 22, 1941) wholeheartedly supporters of the war. (c) Non-Europeans have played (and are playing) a considerable part in war production and as members of the armed forces. In spite of the fact that they are thus helping to defend "their" country, the colour bar remains. South Africa has not learnt much from the lessons of Malaya and Burma and India.

General Smuts, nor those of General Hertzog, nor the Nationalist Party under Dr. Malan are prepared to surrender South-West Africa. The former United Party said so specifically, and the Nationalists imply it. It would be a grave error to confuse Nationalism in South Africa with any strong pro-German sentiments, or to think that the Nationalists are any less imperially-minded than the followers of General Smuts and General Hertzog. The only ways in which South-West Africa will be lost to the Union will be by direct conquest by Germany—and the conquest will not be undefended—or if some policy of appeasement led the Tories into forcing the Union to surrender the territory, perhaps offering the three Protectorates immediately as compensation.

Previous chapters have shown the capitalist nature of white rule in South Africa, and it remains to show how that capitalism is developing into its later stage of imperialism, an imperialism that does not rest content with retaining what it has in the shape of an ex-German colony.

In 1935 Native workers in the copper mines of Northern Rhodesia struck for higher pay, and riots took place. Just before this, Mr. Pirow, then South African Minister of Defence, had made a speech to a Press Conference in which he mentioned that the Union Defence Force, which was then being actively expanded, might conceivably be used to suppress a "black rising" in a neighbouring territory. Here was his chance. Aeroplanes, paid for by the Union taxpayers, were flown to the Copper Belt to assist private mining companies in "dealing with their labour problem"; and the usual excuses of safeguarding the "women and children" were foisted on the public.

Other South African statesmen have not Mr. Pirow's vigorous impetuosity, but they have, nevertheless, expressed themselves in terms that show unmistakably the imperialist trend of South African thought. When Mr. Pirow made his pilgrimage to London in 1938, to solve the colonial problem and to discuss "defence" problems, a leading English newspaper in South Africa commented that "the Union was a white nation in an advanced state of political and economic evolution" and was "a factor which European powers must reckon with when they come to concern themselves with the future of Africa". The writer of the article admitted that "Europe is still in a large measure the arbiter of our destinies by reason of military and economic forces", but added that "when territorial changes are made the two million Europeans of the Union will insist on being heard", for the Union is the leader of European civilisation in Africa.

There is constant talk in South Africa of expansion northwards, of a common Native policy, and of the markets of Africa that await exploitation by the Union; but the expansion of the empire of South Africa must begin in the south, hence the attitude of the political parties towards the Protectorates and South-West Africa. They are to be the first step; after that will come Southern Rhodesia, who refused to join the Union in 1923,

but who has since felt the economic pinch which the Union is able to apply in the question of export duties and a cattle embargo. As regards Portuguese East Africa, that will depend on events in Europe; this ancient Portuguese colony is already almost an economic dependency of the Union.

Except in relation to the Protectorates and South-West Africa, South African capitalism does not yet show itself in any very definite imperialist form; but that form is there, and is gradually taking shape. The present war will probably accelerate the growth of an indigenous imperialism, and it is a political and economic factor to be reckoned with.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER XVI

### POLITICS AND THE PRESS

#### 1. NATIONALIST POLITICS

THE MOST interesting, the most homogeneous and probably the most vigorous political party in the Union to-day is the Nationalist Party under the leadership of Dr. Malan. Faced, as it was until the outbreak of war, with the overwhelming majority of the United Party, the thirty odd members of the Nationalist Party seemed a very small band; but these members represent, proportionately, far more voters than the parliamentary strength of the party indicates; and its numbers are growing. The question of war split the United Party, and the Nationalist Party is, for practical purposes, much stronger than it used to be.

The main strength of the Nationalist Party lies in the *platteland*, the rural areas, and it is almost entirely an Afrikaner party; in fact, one of its strongest appeals to the electorate lies in its emphasis on Afrikaner traditions and ideals and in its conscious revival, in thought, speech, dress, religion, and amusements, of the good old days. The party thrives on persecution, usually imagined, and is continually discovering slights to the Afrikaner tradition and language; the "soul" of the Afrikaner is represented as being in constant danger of being lost, and the exhilarating atmosphere of a call to action in the face of such danger has good propaganda value, especially when the call to action is couched in Boer military terms that awaken memories of the Boer struggle for independence—"opsaal, burgers" (saddle your horses, burghers).

<sup>1</sup> This has happened. The "Greater Africa" idea is very much a topic of conversation these days (1942) and the Union is rapidly coming to regard itself as the "dominant" power in African affairs. The Springboks (Union troops) are spoken of as the successors to the pioneer Voortrekkers, and vigorous efforts are being made for trade to follow the Union flag.

The Nationalist Party professes to be anti-Imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-socialist or -communist, anti-liberal, and anti-Semitic, and these claims deserve examination. It is anti-imperialist, but it wants to retain South-West Africa, and it demands the Protectorates; its orators and political pamphleteers, often miscalled "historians", are full of the sins of British imperialism in South Africa; Boer imperialism, *vis-à-vis* the Bantu, is depicted as the struggle of a small but divinely-guided group of heroes fighting hordes of savages. To the Nationalist, it is British imperialism that is the chief cause of the poverty of the Afrikaner; it is also British imperialism that led to mixed marriages, the non-European vote, and the "disrespect" which the Native now evinces towards Europeans. Eliminate the imperial factor, say the Nationalists, and these things will soon disappear.

So far from being anti-imperialists, the Nationalists are, in fact, republican imperialists. What they want is the chance to play the emperor, and their claim to be anti-imperialists is hollow when examined in the light of their professed policy towards non-Europeans and towards South Africa's neighbouring territories. Their profession of an anti-capitalist faith has even less supporting evidence. They make great play with "organised capital", and show how it is exploiting the Afrikaners in the towns. One leading Nationalist said in 1938: "The Afrikaner soul has been suppressed. The sudden rise of capitalism has driven the Afrikaner to the towns where he finds the foreigner in control. Trade Unionism is British and gives no protection to the Afrikaner worker. Afrikaner daughters are exploited in factories. *The solution is for Afrikaners to become owners of the factories*" (author's italics). This last sentence expresses rather naïvely the real nature of Nationalist anti-capitalism—they want a share in the exploitation of the worker. It is hardly necessary to point out that a political party whose strength lies in private ownership of land, whose Native policy is "to keep the Native in his place", and whose Labour policy is an attempt to divide European workers' unions on racial lines, has not only no claim to call itself anti-capitalist, but may be accused of deliberately misleading the Afrikaner workers. Apart from other considerations, the Nationalist Party has never yet thought out the implications of its so-called anti-capitalism. A fair amount of Afrikaner money is invested in gold shares, so that the cry of further taxation of the mines will prove hollow if the Nationalists get into power; also, the British imperialist can be evicted only by a repudiation of debt, and no nationalist has, so far, even mentioned that as part of the party's policy.

In claiming to be opposed to socialism and communism and to liberalism, the Nationalist Party is on much surer ground. At the end of 1938 Dr. Malan said: "Communism and liberalism are more dangerous here than in other countries because of the colour question. Behind communism and liberalism was the increasing power of the Jews. In all

countries Jews were either communists or liberals." Dr. Malan is an educated man, and does actually know better than this; but he leads—or follows—the Nationalist Party, which sees in communism the abolition of the colour bar. In March 1939 the Garment Workers' Union on the Rand held a meeting at which, among others, an Afrikaner girl spoke as a communist; a Nationalist paper reported this under the headline: "Boer girl not ashamed to be a communist".

As for liberalism, that much-abused word, anyone who advocates non-European rights is dubbed "liberal" or "negrophilist" by the Nationalists. Liberalism is a term of reproach to many Afrikaners, but British readers should not confuse it with the policy of the Liberal Party in Britain. The word actually has a semi-religious significance, since it was first applied to a few Dutch Reformed Church ministers who wandered from the fundamentalist path; they were called "die liberale", and some of this religious stigma still attaches to the word.

The Nationalist Party is anti-Semitic, but is in a somewhat difficult position, since a considerable amount of advertisement matter for the Nationalist Press comes from Jewish firms. There are two wings of the party on this question. Dr. Malan, on the right, is obviously nervous of a strong anti-Semitic drive, partly because he honestly does not think that way, and partly because he is afraid of damaging his party; he would be content with restricting Jewish immigration. On the left is Mr. Eric Louw, the Goebbels of the Nationalist Party, who was for about ten years the Union's representative abroad; for three of those years he was in Paris, where, apparently, he was frightened out of his wits by the communist and Jewish bogeys. He is fanatical in his anti-Semitism, and, as usual, blames the Jews for both communism and capitalism. The Nationalist Press personifies industrial capitalism on the Rand under the name of "Hoggenheimer", or "Hoggie" for short, and the political cartoonists depict a fat Jew dictating to the Government. This device of associating the Jews with industrial capitalism, has all the advantages of simplicity, and the bemused Afrikaner is enabled to trace all the evils of his economic condition directly to Hoggenheimer. Nor are the Nationalists alone in their anti-Semitism. Large numbers of people of other political parties secretly or openly agree with them; South Africa's immigration laws are sufficient proof of this. The great majority of South Africans believe that the Jews have a stranglehold on capital, on commerce, and on the Press. This belief is attained by the simple process of choosing the few Jews who are capitalists and neglecting all the capitalist Gentiles. It is certainly true that some of the most spectacular millionaires have been Jews, and that some of the most hard-working and self-sacrificing communists are Jews. The large majority of Jews are, however, reasonably well-off commercial and professional men and women, good citizens of the Union. And, in spite of the propaganda against them, Nationalist as well as other less openly anti-Jewish citizens support

Jewish firms and deal with Jewish professional men, not by any means because an absence of Gentile competitors compels them to do so.

The Nationalist Party loudly proclaims that it is not anti-British, and frequently protests that it is merely a trick of the capitalist Press to say that it is. Being a republican party, and making its chief appeal to the Afrikaner, the Nationalist Party is against the imperial connection and is, in that sense, anti-British. For such an attitude it is hardly to be blamed, though the Afrikaner-English situation is not eased by it. The ordinary Afrikaner is quite willing to co-operate with the English-speaking citizens and to live at social and commercial peace with them; but the ordinary Afrikaner is not left to himself. His leaders and his Press are continually urging him to isolate himself from outside influences. The Nationalists have had a hard fight to establish the Afrikaans language in a position of equality with its more powerful rival, and they fear that any relaxation of the cultural tension will cause the ordinary Afrikaner to backslide and become "Anglicised". Readers of the Nationalist Press are urged to use Afrikaans, as it is their right to do, on all occasions, to demand to be served in Afrikaans, to ask for Afrikaans accounts from commercial firms, to send their children to schools where Afrikaans is the sole medium of instruction, though English is taught as a second language. The "ware Afrikaner" (true Afrikaner) must refuse to speak English in private or in public, and the Nationalist Press conducts perennial heresy hunts against Government or municipal officials who speak English only. Under this urge, separate schools and universities have been established where Afrikaans predominates; students who want to study overseas are urged to go to Holland or Germany, but not to British universities, where they will "become Englishmen"; a few teachers even refused to accept their monthly cheques when they were printed in English.

This attitude of the Nationalists towards everything English may be more justly described as pro-Afrikaner than anti-British. As such it received a tremendous impetus from the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek in 1938. The revival of Voortrekker beards, dress, games, songs, and dances; the symbolic trek of ox-wagons from all parts of South Africa to Pretoria, where the foundation stone of a Voortrekker monument was laid; the continuous insistence by the speakers at the celebrations on the cultural and linguistic heritage of the Afrikaner—all these were part of a gigantic Nationalist campaign for political purposes. Many Nationalists wished to exclude English-speaking people from the celebrations, and Afrikaans only was used in the ceremonies; so completely had the Nationalist Party captured the Trek Celebrations, which had begun as a great *national* movement, that the head of the Government (at that time General Hertzog) and most of his followers took no part in the proceedings.

The bitterness between English and Afrikaners engendered by this movement penetrated to all quarters, and in one of the Rand towns it

was reported that a girl from an Afrikaans school had gone to a cinema in Voortrekker dress and was jeered at by the pupils from an English-medium school; the Afrikaner children "accepted the challenge and ill-feeling between the two schools prevailed". In almost every town streets were renamed in honour of Voortrekker heroes, and the towns that refused were held up to obloquy as anti-Afrikaans. Since the town councils of a great many towns are manned by English-speaking citizens, a number of mayors found themselves in the awkward position of insulting one half of the citizens if they stayed away from the celebrations, and annoying the other half if they went; when they did go they frequently had to listen to endless diatribes against the wicked English, though they as frequently did not understand, the Afrikaans language being used.

As a result of the propaganda of the Trek Celebrations the Afrikaans movement has taken on a new and vigorous lease of life. One of the functions of the *Ossewa Brandwag*, which was described earlier, is to seek out the graves of men who fell during the Anglo-Boer war (or in any Native war) and to lay wreaths on them. This ceremony is, of course, accompanied by a great display of Voortrekker uniforms and by plenty of Nationalist propaganda speeches. Cultural societies, youth movements, and political rallies are all used to attract young and old to the Nationalist Party. In every walk of life the Nationalists are pushing their republican propaganda—in education, the Church, farmers' unions, hospital boards, welfare societies, and local government. The deputy-leader of the Party in the Free State implored the Party Congress (October 1939) to adopt as its watchword, to be used on all occasions, even at weddings, the motto: "Forward to a Republic". In September 1939 a so-called *Volkskongres* was held to discuss economic questions as they touched the Afrikaner and to establish an Afrikaner capital fund that could be used to finance purely Afrikaans commercial and industrial ventures. At the congress one of the economists from the University of Stellenbosch divided national wealth, income, and capital into English and Afrikaans and proceeded to draw the wildest deductions from his assumptions.

Dutch Reformed Church ministers are playing a big part in this revival of Afrikaans nationalism. In the days of Milner and the Anglo-Boer war the *Predikante* (ministers) were the leaders of the Boers in their resistance against British rule, and they were cordially hated and reviled for their pains by Milner. In their fight for independence, thus, the Boers had the united influence of their Church on their side. To-day, however, the Church is not united, and the *Predikante* firebrands lead a minority of the South African people in a crusade for Afrikaner independence. In 1899 Church and people were united in defending their liberty; to-day a minority is embittering racial feelings for the sake of a narrow and sectional ideal that has about it very little of the air of nobility that char-

acterises a people struggling for freedom ; it has, rather, a good deal of the appearance of Fascism.

In allying themselves with the Nationalist Party, those ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church who take a leading part in the Afrikaner movement are endeavouring to identify nationalism with religion, and they hope to evoke a revived enthusiasm for the Church. A good Nationalist must be a faithful member of the Church ; and since this involves abstention from card-playing, dancing, and cocktail parties, the propagandists are not finding the going easy, especially among the younger generation brought up on cinemas and jazz. Appeals to the youth to revive the old Voortrekker games and songs, and to drink coffee, are making only slight headway ; but, with the example of the youth of Germany before us, it is unsafe to prophesy. The Nationalists are probably quite right in assuming that, left to themselves, the Afrikaner youth will become South African rather than Nationalist Afrikaners ; hence their intense propaganda and the continual appeal to tradition.

The political use made of Afrikaans need not blind us to the intrinsic merits of that language ; nor should it be assumed that the Nationalists are the only true—as they are the loudest—upholders of the Afrikaans tradition. With few exceptions South Africans have accepted the position that the Union is a bilingual country, and some of the finest interpreters of the Afrikaans language and culture are not Nationalists, but educated South Africans who are capable of meeting English-speaking citizens (or the citizens of any country) on equal ground.

Afrikaans is not an artificially revived language dug up from the dead past. It has for generations been the spoken language of the people, and, according to Jespersen's definition of the development of language, it is probably the most highly developed of all modern languages, having freed itself from the shackles of unnecessary grammatical terminology. It is acknowledged as a subject for the London matriculation, and courses in Afrikaans are given at Bedford College. In view of these facts it is unfortunate that so many English-speaking South Africans have failed to acquire a use of Afrikaans, the second official language ; and it is even more to be deprecated that Afrikaans is still spoken of slightly as an inferior language, as "kitchen-Dutch", as the "taal", by people who ought to know better. Some of the worst offenders in this respect are English writers who want to use Afrikaans words for the sake of local colour, but who seldom trouble to spell the words correctly. Noting all this, the Nationalists quite naturally come to the conclusion that, in the minds of English-speaking South Africans, Afrikaans is a despised language to which, at best, an attitude of condescending tolerance must be observed in the interests of peace and good-will. Historically and at the present time, Afrikaners have a good deal of justice on their side when they assume the existence of this attitude in their English-speaking fellow-citizens. And it is no use pointing out to an Afrikaner that bi-



lingualism ought to mean the right to use either language. He replies, quite correctly, that at public meetings and on committees he can understand his English-speaking colleague, but his English-speaking colleague cannot understand him when he speaks Afrikaans. To the people who were conquered by the British this is naturally galling, and the political use made of Afrikaans by the Nationalist Party is an understandable, if unfortunate, result.

## 2. OTHER PARTIES

The United South African Party came into being and into power as the result of political and economic forces that were described in previous chapters; after an existence of six years it broke on the question as to whether South Africa should remain neutral in the war against Germany. It was an unwieldy party with two small wings and a somewhat inert centre that usually lent towards the right; in spite of its overwhelming parliamentary majority the party was too weak to allow of any serious criticism from within. When Mr. Hofmeyr, leader of the liberal left wing, became too critical of proposed colour-bar laws in 1939, he was evicted from the party caucus in Parliament; General Hertzog, then Prime Minister, would tolerate no signs of insubordination among the rank and file of the party. The right wing of the party was almost indistinguishable from the Nationalists, and constantly pressed the Government to steal the Nationalist thunder in the matter of colour-bar politics; it was probably only the knowledge that, if pressed too hard, more people would follow Mr. Hofmeyr that deterred the Government from even more reactionary legislation than that which already stood to its credit. The United Party was imperialist and capitalist. In the eyes of its supporters its great merit was that it united English and Afrikaners in one political party; viewed from the angle of the working-class, such a union is a danger rather than a merit. The United Party was strong enough to effect a "solution" of the Native question by compromise, and we have seen how that solution has meant, progressively, a policy of loading the financial responsibility for social services on to the Natives themselves. It has meant more, and not less, colour-bar legislation.

The break-up of the United Party on the question of war has opened the way for the formation of an Afrikaner *bloc* that will contain a majority of Afrikaans-speaking citizens; but a respectable minority of Afrikaners will not join the Nationalist Party, the nucleus of such a *bloc*, on its present policy. It is highly probable that when the war is over the conception of a United Party will be revived.

The Dominion Party, under Colonel Stallard, is of small significance, and consists of a few of the English-speaking followers of General Smuts who refused to follow him into the United Party. For practical purposes they once more belong to General Smuts' party.<sup>1</sup> They distinguished

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Stallard is Minister of Mines in General Smuts' Cabinet.

themselves in debate chiefly by hair-splitting academic arguments on the divisibility or otherwise of the Crown and by impassioned defence of the National Anthem and the Empire.

European labour is represented in Parliament by a few Trade Unionists and by one or two Socialists. They carry little weight in a Parliament so overwhelmingly conservative, and they are neither united in their efforts nor decided in their own minds what policy they wish to advocate. A strong Labour Party is unlikely to develop in South Africa until European and non-European workers combine; and then it will be an extra-parliamentary power, because of the unenfranchised masses. For the purposes of the war, Labour has officially joined the Government of General Smuts and has been given a seat in the Cabinet.

### 3. LIBERALISM

Outside Parliament there are small and scattered groups of liberals who accept the broad implications of the colour bar but advocate extensive reform, and, in some cases, direct co-operation with non-Europeans. It is fair to these liberals to explain that by accepting the broad implications of the colour bar they do not approve of the colour bar, but feel that, at the present stage, it is necessary. There is no political liberal party, but the liberals are able to make themselves felt through such institutions as the South African Institute of Race Relations. This non-political body aims at encouraging scientific research into the relations between the various races and into the conditions of those races, and on the basis of those investigations it puts forward a policy of reform in wage conditions, housing, health, agriculture, education, and other matters of vital day-to-day importance for the non-Europeans. It is instrumental in summoning conferences of representatives of all the races and in mobilising liberal public opinion against the most flagrant forms of injustice. Its influence is increased since it makes a point of knowing the facts and since it has attracted to its ranks a number of men and women of high academic and professional standing.

Akin to the Institute of Race Relations, and working in close contact with it, are Joint Councils in various towns—European-Bantu, European-Coloured, and European-Indian Joint Councils. There are about forty of these throughout the country, and they have contributed considerably towards the growth of a more liberal spirit; they have also helped to improve living conditions in the local locations. The European membership of these Councils comprises professional men and women, missionaries and ministers, an occasional business man, university professors, and a few officials; the non-European members are teachers, doctors, nurses, officials, and artisans.

In the two universities that are, not quite accurately, called English-speaking, there is a considerable body of liberal opinion among under-

graduates and staff; on the other hand, the two Afrikaans-speaking universities appear to elevate reactionary thought to the rank of a virtue.

Up till recently liberals were able to exert pressure on Governments, although they were too dispersed to gain representation in Parliament. The union of the two major parties, however, had a dampening effect on liberalism, since the Government was strong enough in numbers to be able to ignore so scattered a vote, and weak enough, inherently, to be afraid of offending the right wing of its party. Further, the United Party professed to unite English and Afrikaners; but the union was precarious, and any suggestions for reform were rejected on the convenient grounds that they might imperil the relations between English and Afrikaners. The result is that liberalism is fighting a gallant rear-guard action, and all it can do is to try to prevent the forces of reaction from having it all their own way. It is, indeed, apparent that the limits of reformism have been reached, and that any further improvement in the living conditions of the non-European proletariat will have to be achieved along the lines of industrial action rather than by liberal influence in politics.

#### 4. COMMUNISM

If the Nationalist Press were to be believed, South Africa has for long been on the verge of a communist revolution, backed by "Russian Gold". As a matter of sober fact the Communist Party in the Union is small and divided, and its efforts to recruit followers from among the non-Europeans have not met with a great deal of success. Europeans have too readily assumed that the Native of South Africa is ripe for communism because, tribally, he lives a communal life. There is, however, a vast gulf between primitive agricultural communalism and a highly-developed industrial communism. The African worker is uneducated, unskilled, and superstitious, and he is not easily organised; he is conservative by nature, and, though his whole social structure has been dislocated by individualist capitalism, he has hardly begun to realise his place in the industrial machine. As an African, he cannot help being race-conscious; but, as a worker, he is far from class-conscious. And in so far as he is class-conscious, his main object is to escape from the working class into the *petit bourgeois* class. Living as the Native workers do, many of them are prepared to listen sympathetically, and even eagerly, to promises of a better time under communism; but not more than a negligible handful have any inkling of the real meaning of communism. What the Nationalist Press mistakes for communism is sheer discontent blindly directed against an exploitation whose nature the African does not understand. When thinking of communism in connection with South Africa it should be remembered that the European skilled worker and the Native unskilled worker have this in common, that both are race-conscious, but neither is class-conscious. It ought to be the primary

mission of communism in South Africa to destroy race-consciousness and bring class-consciousness to birth. Until that mission is properly understood, communists will be beating the air and misleading the workers.

## 5. THE PRESS

There are about 390 registered newspapers in the Union. Of these, about thirty are non-European papers with small circulations; about twenty-five are European newspapers that have a circulation wider than the town in which they are published; and the balance is made up of technical journals, a few political weeklies, and a host of small-town sheets that deal with local affairs and local gossip but have little influence on provincial or national politics. For our present purpose it is only the papers with wide circulations, the non-European Press, and the political weeklies that need detain us; the local newspapers do, indeed, often display a vigorous independence and a pleasing directness that are refreshing in an age of a sensational and politically-controlled Press, but their influence is too limited to be of any but social significance.

The European Press is almost entirely under the political control of one or other of the major political parties and is, in consequence, capitalistically controlled and unable to offend either agricultural and industrial capitalism or the political party to which it happens to be attached. Given this class and party bias, the standard of reporting and of journalism is probably no better and no worse than that of a large number of dailies in London and the provinces. Selection and suppression of news, distortion of political speeches, misleading emphasis in headlines, are as well known in Britain as in South Africa as part of the regular machinery of propaganda. South African newspapers frequently refuse to print letters that might, at critical moments, influence readers in a "wrong" direction.

The Nationalist Party has two important and two minor daily papers. At Cape Town they have *Die Burger*, which General Hertzog helped to found in his opposition days and which Dr. Malan at one time edited; in the Transvaal they have *Die Transvaler*. Together with their satellites, *Die Oosterlig* in the Eastern Province and *Die Volksblad* in the Free State, these papers are vigorous upholders of Nationalist imperialism, of Afrikaans traditions and language, of anti-Semitism, anti-communism and anti-liberalism, and of the colour bar in all spheres of life. Being Opposition papers, their chief aim is to discredit the Government by uncovering its imperialist tendencies, its relations with, and tender care of, mine magnates, and its supposedly pro-Native policy; since their readers are largely farmers, a good deal of space is devoted to showing how agriculture is starved for the sake of the capitalists and the Natives.

It was the Nationalist Press that, at the end of 1938, began a campaign for a monster petition to the Government to enforce segregation in

towns, to prohibit mixed marriages, and to save the "white man"; it was this campaign that produced violent reactions among the Coloured people at the Cape and frightened the Government of the day into promising legislation to control Asiatics in the Transvaal. The strength of the Nationalist Party and the influence of its Press may be roughly gathered from the number of voters who, after an intensive campaign, signed the petition. The figures are:

Cape Province . . .	132,855	out of a possible	422,937.
Transvaal . . .	56,010	" "	391,850.
Free State . . .	36,795	" "	105,413.
Natal . . .	4,959	" "	98,368.
Total . . .	230,619	" "	1,018,568.

The Nationalist Press claims that, unlike the "capitalist" Press, it derives its funds from the "pennies of the people". The claim is based on the fact that shares in *Die Nasionale Pers* are more widely held than in the English Press. But large daily newspapers do not maintain themselves on the pennies of the poor, and the Nationalist Press is dependent on advertisements, even from the maligned Jewish firms. Apart from that, in any case, the Nationalists have their capitalists too, though they are not perhaps as wealthy as the mine magnates; and, as a matter of strict fact, it was the funds subscribed by half-a-dozen wealthy Nationalists that founded *Die Nasionale Pers*.

The United Party Press consisted of two Afrikaans and about a dozen English papers. General Hertzog found that, when he joined with General Smuts, the Press that he had been instrumental in founding turned violently against him and supported Dr. Malan. He accordingly set to work and established *Die Vaderland* in the Transvaal and *Die Suiderstem* at Cape Town to demonstrate that the United Party was not only English, but English and Afrikaans. When the United Party split in September 1939, *Die Vaderland* followed General Hertzog and *Die Suiderstem* followed General Smuts, whose followers had managed to get a controlling interest in it just before the crisis.

The English Press supports General Smuts; it followed him into the United Party, and out again. Some of these papers, and particularly those belonging to the Argus Group, have long upheld a liberal tradition towards the non-European population, and they have been courageous in exposing and featuring maladministration of justice, unreasonable taxation, and evil social conditions. Their activities in these directions have earned for them the usual abuse from the Nationalist Press as "kaffirboeties" (brothers of the kaffir), but the liberalism of the English Press as a whole is not extended beyond liberal reformism, and even that does not go very deep.

The English Press in the Union is pro-British, and attacks the republican and Afrikaans movement wherever possible. Being an urban Press,

it is apt to be unsympathetic towards agricultural interests, on the double grounds of economic interests and political and racial bias. Though the days when the ultra-English papers referred slightly to the "backveld Boers" are passing, and though the *Cape Times* has long since ceased referring to *Mister Hertzog* and *General Smuts*, there is still a considerable social distance between the Afrikaner farmer and the town-bred Englishman, and this difference is reflected in the Press of both European sections of the population.

A large section of the English Press is under the influence of big business in the shape of the mining houses, and there is ample evidence that, while some latitude is allowed editors on "harmless" matters in domestic politics, financial policy and foreign policy must be dealt with along lines best suited to the capitalist interests concerned. During the September crisis of 1938 the *Cape Argus* suddenly announced that its editor, Advocate McCausland, K.C., had resigned. It subsequently transpired, though not through the English Press, that Mr. John Martin, Director of the Bank of England, Chairman of the Argus Company, and one of the most important figures in gold-mining, had issued instructions to the Argus Group of papers to refrain from criticising Mr. Chamberlain's policy of appeasement at Munich. When Advocate McCausland, who had, until the receipt of the instructions, been mildly questioning the wisdom of the British Prime Minister, refused to change his editorial policy, Mr. Martin cabled from London dismissing him. The Argus Group controls the following papers: *The Argus*, *Star*, *Pretoria News*, *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, *Natal Daily News*, *Lorenzo Marques Guardian*, *Bulawayo Chronicle*, and the *Rhodesian Herald*; it has partial control over other papers.<sup>1</sup>

That part of the English Press in South Africa not directly controlled by the big financial interests is rather more free in its criticism of British foreign policy. This embarrassed General Hertzog, when he was Prime Minister, considerably, and on several occasions he officially apologised to the German Government for slighting remarks made by South African papers about Herr Hitler.

The labour Press consists largely of Trade Union journals which are reactionary or progressive according to the Trade Union. It is hardly to be expected that a progressive labour paper will flourish where the majority of European workers support a colour bar against their fellow-workers. When *Forward*, a labour weekly, is concerned with "racial questions", it refers to the relations between English and Afrikaans workers; it hardly seems to be aware of the existence of a non-European proletariat. The communist Press is small, struggling, and vigorous.

Apart from a few Indian and Coloured papers, there are about eighteen Native papers, the biggest being *Umteteli wa Bantu* and the *Bantu World*,

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written, a few more English papers have come under Mining control, and one prominent journalist (George Heard) has been dismissed because of his Left Wing opinions.

both published in Johannesburg, both mainly in English and partly in a Native language, and each having a circulation of about 5,000 and a reading public of about 50,000. A few years ago a company, the Bantu Press, Limited, was founded, partly with European capital and under European control; this company now owns five of the biggest African newspapers, including the *Bantu World* and the *Imvo zaBantsundu*, an Eastern Province paper founded as long ago as 1884.

Though Bantu newspapers freely expose and criticise abuses and attack policies and politicians with vigour, they are not revolutionary or even anti-European or anti-capitalist; one or two of the lesser-known papers, under the guidance of European communists, insert a fair amount of socialist propaganda, sometimes under the guise of lessons in basic English. Many Africans subscribe to the European papers because they provide a better news service.

## 6. CENSORSHIP

Apart from regulations during war, the South African Press has, up till the present, been legally free, subject to the usual laws of libel, inciting to violence, and obscenity. This freedom is extended to speech, though the police have powers to prohibit a meeting if they think a breach of the peace is likely to result; in 1939 a Fascist meeting was so prohibited at Cape Town. Under the Riotous Assemblies (Amendment) Act of 1930, the Minister of Justice may prohibit meetings if he thinks that they are likely to cause ill-feeling between Europeans and non-Europeans, and he may prohibit the publication and distribution of printed matter likely to have an adverse effect on the relations between black and white. This act was aimed at Native "agitators", but it has not been applied to any great extent, and in practice Natives are allowed considerable liberty of speech. In October of 1938, for example, Dr. Seme, an African addressing a meeting of Africans, was reported in the Press as having criticised the appointment of Mr. Fourie to the Cabinet in the following terms: "He is one of the greatest enemies of the Natives. He has done more harm to us than any other politician. His appointment was a great insult to us and I ask the Conference to take strong exception to it." Dr. Seme was not arrested.

Though the Press and speech are still free, their freedom has been attacked. Beginning at the end of 1938, the Nationalist Party and its Press began to call loudly for the control of Native speech, and particularly for the prohibition of meetings on the Parade Ground at Cape Town, the scene of most of the large non-European rallies. At about the same time the United Party Congress passed resolutions demanding control of "lying propaganda", by which it meant the Nationalist Press. The Prime Minister at the time, General Hertzog, whose tendency to apologise to Germany for careless comment on Herr Hitler we have

noted, was only too ready to oblige his party, and in 1939 he consulted a number of selected United Party editors—but not the Society of Journalists—on draft legislation. In spite of the secrecy surrounding the proceedings, it leaked out that the legislation was to be modelled on the Italian Press laws and was to include group libel, and, of course, insulting references to heads of foreign states. Legislation was still in the draft stage when war broke out, and it is likely to remain there for some time. The whole episode may serve as a warning of the ease with which South African statesmen think in terms of Press censorship.

South Africans depend to a large extent on papers and literature from overseas, and particularly from the United States and Great Britain. To control this import of literature the Government has set up a Board of Censors which may recommend to the Minister for the Interior that the import of any book or periodical or picture should be prohibited. Besides preventing the importation of a number of sex-periodicals masquerading as health or detective magazines, the Minister was compelled by Nationalist agitation to ban *Turning Wheels*, a book about the Great Trek in which the characters were drawn in uncomplimentary colours. More startling was the temporary ban on a Left Book Club issue, *A.R.P.*, by Prof. Haldane. This was held up by the customs official who said: "On inspection the books were found to be of a communistic nature, and the customs are not prepared to grant release". In reply to a strong deputiation of liberals, socialists, and others, the Minister for the Interior said that he was "opposed to keeping out communist literature, except propaganda for the Natives", but he did not explain how he proposed to differentiate. It was in connection with this hold-up that the *Natal Witness* referred to the Board of Censors as follows: "The intellectual content of that body is the mathematical mean of a trio of retired, and obviously tired, military gentlemen of high rank, and a trio of 'schoolmarms' on or off pension". It is interesting to note that at the time that Prof. Haldane's book was lying in bond the Press announced the gift of a "large and valuable collection of German books" by the Nazi Government to the University of Stellenbosch.

## 7. THE CHANCES OF FASCISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africans are fond of saying, "It can't happen here" and of adding that "a touch of Nazi discipline will do us good", meaning by "us" their political opponents. Readers will by now no doubt be aware that the Union is a precursor, and not a follower, in the matter of racial doctrines. Long before the Nuremberg laws were promulgated in Nazi Germany, South Africa had laws compelling its citizens to be careful about their grandmothers. In 1939 the children of a European were evicted from a Durban school—in Durban they speak little Afrikaans—which they had attended for some time, because their father was unable to



prove that the children's grandparents were both Europeans. The courts upheld the action of the principal of the school.

Nor is it only in the matter of race that South Africa has little to learn about Fascism. The majority of the population is held in subjection in a manner that has all the elements of Fascism, but differs, at the moment, from its European prototype in allowing a certain amount of liberty of thought and speech. What liberty remains will be attacked as economic conditions worsen, unless by then Fascism has been decisively defeated in Europe.

Organised defence against Fascism in the Union is poor because the greatest possible force, a strong labour movement, is lacking through the refusal of organised labour to do more than safeguard its wages at the expense of the mass of the workers. Liberals will suffer the fate of liberalism everywhere else, and will be blown away as by a breath of wind. There is one natural defence, and that is the very strong individualism of the Afrikaner, who, it must be remembered, is not the working class, but part of the ruling class. It will require more strength than Fascism can muster within the Union to enforce discipline on the Afrikaner farming population, scattered as it is. And, while the Afrikaner in power may continue to oppress the Native, he is unlikely to force a full-blown Fascism on the country; he is more likely to resist any attempt to do so.

Summing up the economic and social forces at work in South Africa, the conclusion is that, while the Union is undemocratic and semi-Fascist, it is unlikely that a thorough-going Fascism can be forced on the country without conquest. In other words, the real danger lies in a world victory for the Fascist Powers. There is, of course, always the danger that the economic consequences of war may ripen the country more rapidly for dictatorship; but that is a matter for the future, on which speculation at this stage would be futile.

## CHAPTER XVII

### CONCLUSION

**P**REVIOUS CHAPTERS have attempted to describe in some detail the historical and social forces at work in the Union of South Africa. When we clear away the details, the fundamental features of the situation are revealed, and may be briefly summarised as follows:—

1. South Africa is a large and, relatively, poor country; politically, it appears independent, but economically it is still a semi-colonial area, with Britain as the mother-country. Its apparent political independence prevents the Imperial Government from interfering in its internal arrangements, for example, in the matter of colour-bar laws; but its

dependent economic status binds it securely to imperial interests in Britain. The ruling class in Britain is thus able to enjoy the financial benefits of association with South Africa while discarding all responsibility for the welfare of the mass of the inhabitants.

2. While South Africa is a semi-colonial area that pays tribute to the mother-country, it is itself a capitalist country in which the ruling class consists of Europeans to whom the non-European masses must pay tribute. In the same way that the Imperial Government has secured the interests of British capitalists by an arrangement, called Dominion Status, whereby financial privileges are unhampered by social responsibilities, so Union Governments have secured the interests of South African capitalists by a similar arrangement, called, in this case, Segregation, or "governing the Native along his own lines". By this trick, South African capitalism is able to exploit African labour while pushing the cost of African social services on to the Natives themselves. What the ruling class in Britain is to the population of South Africa, the ruling class in South Africa is to the non-European population of Southern Africa.

The result of segregation in South Africa is to turn the Reserves into national slums and the locations into urban slums. In the same way that Britain's colonial empire is a vast slum where more than half the Native inhabitants are underfed, South Africa's colonies are slums where poverty rules. The transfer of the Protectorates will, in effect, be the handing over of a national slum property from one capitalist landlord to another; the Native inhabitants will continue to pay the ground-rent of imperialism.

3. The dual relationship, just described, which imperialist capitalism creates is carried a stage further within the framework of South African capitalist society. There a double exploitation of labour takes place, once as labour and once as Native labour. In the same way British Imperialism involves a double exploitation of colonial labour, once as labour and once as colonial labour; the colony, as a colony, pays its tribute to the ruling class in Britain, and the Native labourer in the colony pays an additional tribute.

4. South Africa will not escape the consequences of capitalism merely by becoming independent of Great Britain; and the republican movement in the Union is an imperialist republican movement. Nor will the advent of socialism in Britain materially alter the capitalist nature of South African society. A republic in South Africa might, and a socialist Government in England would, break the finance-capitalist relationship between Britain and the Union; but either event would still leave the internal capitalist structure of the Union intact. That structure can only be altered by an indigenous socialism purged of the colour bar—a socialism based on class and not on race.

5. In a world of power-politics South Africa cannot stand alone.

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